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PAST AND PRESENT

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CONTENTS

	Page
Christian Missionaries and Renaissance in Bengal—R. C. Majumdar ...	1
Glimpses of Life and Trade on the Hugli 1720—1770—Holden Furber ..	13
Holt Mackenzie—Forgotten Man of Bengal—Perceval Spear	24
Nawab Walidad Khan and the 1857 Struggle in the Bulandshahr District—Eric Stokes	38
Private British Investment in Eighteenth-Century Bengal—P. J. Marshall	52
The Contribution of Missionaries to Education in Bengal During the Administration of Lord Hastings, 1813-23—M. A. Laird	68
The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and its Influence on Legislation in other Provinces—Dietmar Rothermund	90
The Conflict within the Bengal Renaissance—Susobhan Chandra Sarkar ..	106
Indian Business Enterprise: Its Failure in Calcutta (1800-1848)—N. K. Sinha	112
Cloth Production and Trade in Late Eighteenth Century Bengal: A Report from the Danish Factory in Serampore—Ole Feldbaeck	124
Early Career of Siraj-ud-daulah—K. K. Datta	142
The Crisis at Surat, 1730-32—Ashin Das Gupta	148
Atisa: A Challenge to Indian Scholarship—Nirmal Sinha	163
"Bungoo"—River Thugs on the Hooghly—Sukumar Sen	167
British Attitude to Nepal's Relations with Tibet and China—K. Majumdar	169
Summary of My Political Impressions about India: St. Petersburg, The 13 April 1891—Signed ONOU	185
Editorial Notes	191
Sir Jadunath's Rough Notes	192
Book Reviews	195
The Calcutta Historical Society: Past and Present—Nisith R. Ray ...	203

Christian Missionaries and Renaissance in Bengal

I. INTRODUCTION

The activities of the Christian missionaries have been very adversely criticised by two of the greatest personalities in Bengal in the 19th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy observed in 1821:

"But during the last twenty years, a body of English gentlemen, who are called missionaries, have been publicly endeavouring, in several ways, to convert Hindoos and Mussulmans of this country into Christianity. The first way is that of publishing and distributing among the natives various books, large and small, reviling both religions, and abusing and ridiculing the gods and saints of the former: the second way is that of standing in front of the doors of the natives or in the public roads to preach the excellency of their own religion and the debasedness of that of others: the third way is that if any natives of low origin become Christians from the desire of gain or from any other motives, these gentlemen employ and maintain them as a necessary encouragement to others to follow their example.

"It is true that the apostles of Jesus Christ used to preach the superiority of the Christian religion to the natives of different countries. But we must recollect that they were not of the rulers of those countries where they preached. Were the missionaries likewise to preach the Gospel and distribute books in countries not conquered by the English, such as Turkey, Persia &c., which are much nearer England, they would be esteemed a body of men truly zealous in propagating religion and in following the example of the founders of Christianity. In Bengal, where the English are the sole rulers, and where the mere name of Englishman is sufficient to frighten people, an encroachment upon the rights of her poor timid and humble inhabitants and upon their religion, cannot be viewed in the eyes of God or the public as a justifiable act."[1]

Towards the close of the nineteenth century Swami Vivekananda denounced the Christian missionaries in much stronger language. Addressing an American audience at Detroit be observed:

"One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and pay men to do what? To come over to my country to curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion, and everything. They walk near a temple and say, "You idolators, you will go to hell". . . .

"And whenever your ministers criticise us, let them remember this: If all

India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us."[2]

The views of these two great sons of Bengal naturally carry great weight, and people cannot be blamed for believing that there must have been very good reasons for the views they expressed. There were other great sons of Bengal, too, in the 19th century who denounced, by words and deeds, the activities of Christian missionaries in Bengal. There is no doubt that the main, if not the sole, cause of this hostile attitude against the missionaries was their strong denunciation of the religion, gods and goddesses, religious literature, and social manners and customs of the Hindus which touched the tenderest chord of their heart and deeply wounded their religious feelings.

It is easy to explain the attitude of the missionaries, though very difficult to excuse it from a rational point of view. They were imbued with a deep faith that theirs was the only true religion and the only means of salvation to man, and were inspired by an earnest desire to save the rest of mankind threatened with eternal damnation. That this attitude was not due to, or even much influenced by, racial or national feelings, is proved by the history of religious wars and persecutions in European countries where one section of the Christians hurled death and destruction by fire and sword upon another section in the same country, simply because though both followed the religion of Jesus Christ they differed in some details which would hardly appear to be of very much significance to an outside dispassionate observer. Such being the case, one may understand, if not appreciate, the genesis of extreme aversion and hatred of Christian missionaries towards the followers of Hinduism, which differed in many fundamental and essential points of doctrine and rituals from what they believed to be the only true religion and sole means of salvation.

It is not my object to review the attitude of the missionaries and sit in judgment either on their belief and conduct or its criticism and denunciation by Indians. But I would like to emphasize the fact—often ignored—that in spite of their blind faith in the exclusive truth of their own religion and the activities to which it led, one should not look upon the missionaries as devoid of many good qualities which we appreciate in men. For this would prepare the ground for the object I have in view in writing this paper, namely, a proper appreciation of their contribution to the intellectual and moral progress of the people of Bengal. There has been enough denunciation of the missionaries but it is high time that a historian should exhibit the other side of the shield and make a dispassionate survey of the good that they did to our country. For this purpose I leave out the controversial question of the merit (or evil according to some) of the conversion of a larger number of people to the Christian faith. I shall confine myself to a few select topics concerning missionary activities the good results of which may be said to rest on unimpeachable grounds.

II. BENGALI PROSE LITERATURE

The first great contribution of the missionaries, at least in Bengal, was the impetus given to the creation of literary prose. It is somewhat strange that although there was a very rich poetical literature in Bengali since the 15th century A.D., there was no prose literature worth the name even so late as the 17th century A.D. The missionaries wanted to preach Christianity, and, as in all ages and countries, their proselytising activities were mostly carried among the masses. Centuries ago, Buddhist and Jaina preachers in India discarded Sanskrit and adopted the local Prakrits for disseminating their religious doctrines among the common people. The Christian missionaries, urged by the same motive, felt the same need of preaching their religion to the common people in their spoken languages. Being themselves ignorant of these languages, they began to learn it and, in course of doing so, made a systematic study of the grammar and vocabulary, with special reference to the prose style which they had necessarily to employ. In Bengal, and other regions too, they thus developed or evolved a colloquial prose style intelligible to the masses. Even in the 17th century the Portuguese missionaries in Bengal learned the Bengali language, composed vocabularies and grammar, and translated the Christian doctrines. We learn from a letter of Francisco Fernandez written from Sripur (in E. Pakistan) on 17th January, 1599, that two books composed by him—a small treatise on essentials of Christian religion and a small catechism in the form of a dialogue—were translated by Father Dominic De Souza into Bengali.[3]

Most of these tracts written by the Christian missionaries are lost, but a few have been fortunately preserved. The oldest among these is the Brāhmaṇa-Romān-Kyāthalik Saṁbāda[4] (Arguments and Dispute upon the Law between Roman Catholic and a Brāhmaṇa) written by a Bengali convert who took the name Dom Antonio after his conversion to Christianity. He was the son of a ruler of Bhushna (in East Pakistan) but was carried by the Magh pirates to Arakan in 1663. He was ransomed by a Portuguese Augustinian Friar, Father Manuel do Rozario, who taught him Christian doctrines. Ultimately he was initiated into Christianity, and, with the proverbial zeal of a new convert, brought many Hindus within its fold. He wrote a Bengali treatise in the form of an argument between a Roman Catholic and a Brāhmaṇa with the laudable object of proving the superiority of Christian religion to Hinduism. The book was highly prized by the Christian missionaries as it supplied them with good arguments in their discussion with the Hindus. In 1743 the book was printed at Lisbon by Francisco da Silva in Roman character and was translated into Portuguese by Father Manoel da Assumpcão. As the Bengali words were transcribed in Roman letters by persons not well versed in Bengali pronunciation, it is difficult to restore the exact original reading, but with slight obvious emendation here and there we may obtain from this book a

very good specimen of the old running prose style of the latter part of the 17th century A.D.

The second book was written by Father Manoel da Assumpcao. It was composed in 1734-5 at a place near Bhawal in Dacca District (East Pakistan), and the title of the book is taken to be *Kṛipār Śāstrer Artha-bhed,* ignoring the comma between *Orth* (*artha*) and *Bhed* which occurs in the original. It is written in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil (*Śisya-Guṛur vichār*) and was printed in the year 1743, the year in which the preceding book was printed, though probably composed much later.

As could be expected, the language of the two books is similar, but the long ancedotes contained in the later book offer good many instances of sustained prose writing and give a better idea of the Bengali prose style as it developed in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Manoel da Assumpçao also wrote another book dealing with the grammar and dictionary of the Bengali language.

Dr. S. K. Chatterji has justly observed that the *Kṛipār Śastrer Artha-bhed*[4a] holds an important place in the history of the origin and development of Bengali prose literature and Father Manoel da Assumpcao, as one of the writers in old Bengali prose, richly deserves the gratitude of the Bengalis. The words are also applicable to Dom Antonio.

The work begun by the Portuguese missionaries was continued among others, by an English missionary, Rev. Dr. William Carey (1761-1834). As the East India Company did not allow him to establish a mission in British territory, he formed along with others, in 1799, a missionary settlement at Serampore, then a territory under the Danes. He had studied Greek, Latin, and Hebrew before he left England, and after his arrival in India, acquired proficiency in Bengali and Marathi. He translated the Bible into Bengali and wrote several Bengali books. In 1801 he composed the Bengali grammar and also a book, *Kathopakathan* (Dialogues), in colloquial Bengali which anticipated the colloquial style, associated with the name of Pyari Chand Mitra. He also wrote *Itihāsamālā* (A collection of stories) in 1812 in easy literary style. His monumental work, *Bengali-English Dictionary,* was composed between 1815-25.

But it was not merely by his own contributions that he helped the growth and development of Bengali prose literature. In 1801 he was appointed Professor of Sanskrit, Bengali and Marathi at the newly established Fort William College. He created a Bengali Department and the following letter[5] written by him shows his zeal for promoting Bengali language and literature.

"To the Council of the College of Fort William.

GENTLEMEN,

In reply to a letter from the Secretary to the College Council, under date of the 8th instant, calling upon me to state how far it may be necessary to maintain

the Native Bengali Establishment in the College, which under existing circumstances appears "to be excessive", I beg leave to observe that the Establishment for the Bengalee and Sanskrit languages consists of

A First Pundit	at 200 Rs. per month.
A Second Pundit	at 100 Rs. „
A Writing Master	at 60 Rs. „
A Pundit	at 60 Rs. „
Four Pundits	at 40 Rs. each Rs. 160 making a

total of Sa. Rs. 580 per month.

"Convinced as I am that the Bengalee language is superior in point of intrinsic merit to every language spoken in India, and in point of real utility yields to none, I can never persuade myself to advise a step which would place it in a degraded point of view in the College. While therefore a first and second pundit are retained in the Persian and Hindoostanes Departments I must consider them as equally necessary in this.

. . . It is to be hoped that the present unprecedented and unmerited neglect of the Sanskrit and Bengalee languages will not continue . . .

18 August, 1822. W. Carey."

Inspired by his personal example and encouragement Bengali books in good prose style were written by some of the Pandits of the Fort William College, notably, Ramram Basu, Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar and Rajib Lochan Mukhopadhyaya, whose first works were published, respectively, in 1801, 1802, and 1805 A.D., whereas Rammohan Roy, generally regarded as the father of Bengali prose, published his first Bengali book, *Vedānta-grantha* (translation of the Vedanta) in 1815, in a style which cannot claim superiority to the works of Carey or his colleagues mentioned above. Ramkamal Sen, the contemporary author of *A Dictionary in English and Bengali* (1834) has observed with reference to the institution of the Fort William College in 1800 that "from this time forward writing Bengalee correctly may be said to have begun in Calcutta. . . .

"I must acknowledge here that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengalee language, its improvement, and in fact the establishing it as a language must be attributed to that excellent man Dr. Carey and his colleagues, by whose liberality and great exertions many works have been carried through the Press and the general tone of the language of this province so greatly raised."[6]

A modern historian of Bengali literature has paid the following well-deserved tribute to Carey:

To Carey belongs the credit of having raised the language from its debased condition of an unsettled dialect to the character of a regular and permanent form of speech, capable, as in the past, of becoming the refined and comprehensive vehicle of a great literature in the future. But Carey's activities were not confined

to Bengali language and literature. He translated the Bible in many other languages and composed the grammar and dictionary of Sanskrit, Marathi, Oriya, Assamese, Punjabi and Kanarese. He also compiled a universal Dictionary or Polyglot Vocabulary.

The Baptist Missionary Society of Serampore, of which Carey, Marshman and Ward were distinguished members, promoted the development of Bengali language and literature in two other ways. The first was the establishment of a printing press which printed many Bengali books and gave them wide publicity.

The second was the publication of two Bengali Periodicals—a monthly Journal, *Digdarśana,* which was soon followed by a weekly named *Samāchāra-darpaṇa* in 1818. Neither *Digdarśana* nor *'Baṅgāl Gejeṭi'*, also published earlier in the same year, continued for more than a year, but Samāchāra-darpaṇa the first issue of which was published on 23 May, 1818, had a long and useful career under the editorship of J. C. Marshman. Though, perhaps technically, it was not the oldest Bengali periodical—the two others having preceded it by a very short period—for all practical purposes it may be regarded as the oldest Bengali Periodical which permanently enriched Bengali literature in this new field. It was followed by several other periodicals, notably *Saṁbad-kaumudī,* started in December, 1821, of which Raja Rammohan Roy was the virtual, if not also the nominal, editor. So here, too, the credit for founding Bengali Journal usually given to Rammohan Roy, must go rather to the missionaries of Serampore, if we exclude the shortlived *Baṅgāl Gejeṭi.*

Though Marshman was assisted by Bengali Pandits in editing the paper, it had certain special features which were presumably introduced by him. These are:

1. News of India and Europe.
2. Commercial news.
3. New discoveries in Europe and account of the new machines and industrial development contained in books imported from England every month.
4. Ancient history and culture of India and account of her learned men and books.

Among other regular items published in the Weekly *Samāchāra-darpaṇa* we find:

5. News about the spread of education, particularly English education.
6. Discussion about Bengali language and literature, including accounts of newly published Bengali books on various subjects.

Although copies of *Samāchāra-darpaṇa* are now very difficult to obtain, extensive extracts from its old issues, arranged topically, have been published by Brajendra Nath Banerji.[8] Any one who goes through these will be struck with the wide range of subjects and topics which were regularly described or discussed in this weekly paper. It had a very long and useful career of 23 years, from 23 May, 1818, to 25 December, 1841, when the Serampore missionaries stopped its publication. But it had already proved its great usefulness to such an extent that

its publication was resumed by a few Bengalis in January, 1842. But their venture proved a failure after a short while. The Serampore missionaries again took it up on 3 May, 1851 and finally gave it up in 1853.

It is impossible to exaggerate the important role of the *Samāchāra-darpaṇa* in bringing about the renaissance in Bengal in the 19th century. It contributed, very largely, to the creation of a new type of Bengali prose literature, enlarged the scope of knowledge, of average Bengalis to a considerable extent, and thereby helped the diffusion of liberal and modern ideas on a wide basis. As a bye-product, it has proved to be a very valuable source of information for the history of the people of Bengal in the 19th century.

III. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Next to the growth of Bengali Prose literature and periodicals and the use of printing press for dissemination of knowledge, the great contribution of the Christian missionaries was the establishment of educational institutions for both boys and girls. There is a general assumption, even among the educated people in India, that the British Government introduced English education in order to prepare a set of clerks. Nothing is further from truth than this. English education was introduced in Bengal—as elsewhere in India—not by, but in spite of, the Government which never encouraged, far less patronized, it, till a large number of educational institutions were set up by private efforts and there was a widespread and genuine desire for English education among the middle class Bengalis. Further, the education sought for by the people, and imparted through these institutions, was of a type which was calculated to liberalise the mind. The first great institution of this type was the Hindu College founded in 1817. It is interesting to note the actual state of things then prevailing in this respect. When Sir Hyde East, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was approached by a Bengali Brahmin of some eminence, named Baidyanath Mukherjee, for his support and patronage of the proposed institution, he did not commit himself until he obtained the permission of the Government to associate himself in such a matter, for he was "sure that the Government would rather leave to the Hindus to act as they thought right than in any manner control them". His letter to the Governor-General was placed before the Supreme Council which did not object to a number of leading Hindus to meet at his house and discuss the proposal to found "an establishment for the education of their children in a liberal manner as practised by Europeans of condition".

Thus the scheme of liberal education was launched by the public, and not the Government, and the Christian missionaries were very helpful in this matter. They were, no doubt, inspired by the hope that English education would help or favour the conversion of Indians to Christianity. But whatever might have been

the motive there is no denying the fact that they had substantially contributed to the propagation of English education in Bengal, which must be regarded as the most important single factor that formed the basis of renaissance in Bengal in the 19th century. The Christian missionaries may be said to be pioneers of English education in Bengal. A free school was started as far back as 1731 by St. Andrew's Presbyterian church and a small number of pupils were taught English and modern subjects by a few other missionary organizations. In 1814 the Rev. Robert May founded a free school in his own house for instruction according to the 'Madras system' introduced by the Rev. Dr. Andrew D. D. Bell, which was in effect "a system of mutual instruction by the boys who were thus alternately learners and teachers, one half of the class teaching the other half". The school started with 16 pupils but the number rapidly increased and the school was removed to a separate house within a year. Rev. May established altogether sixteen schools some of which were in villages, with a total enrolment of 951 pupils. There were ten schools in Burdwan in 1819 under the supervision of Christian missionaries.

The Christian missionaries founded the Baptist Mission College at Serampore in 1818 which still exists. They also founded several schools. The Lord Bishop of Calcutta established a College in 1820. Rev. Alexander Duff founded the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta in 1830. Later, when Duff and his colleagues left the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and joined the Free Church of Scotland, they founded in 1843 another college named after it, which was later called Duff College after that great missionary. In June, 1906, the two institutions were united under the name of the Scotish Churches College, which is now one of the best colleges in Calcutta. The St. Xaviers College, another distinguished educational institution in Calcutta, was established in 1860 in the building in the Park Street which had once housed the St. John's College. St. Paul's Cathedral Mission College, another well-known college in Calcutta, was founded in 1865. All the six colleges named above did yeoman's service in promoting English education in Bengal.

Among other less known institutions may be mentioned Loreto House, Calcutta, established in 1842 under the direction of the Loreto Sisters, Scottish Universities Mission College at Kalimpong founded in 1886 by Rev. William Macfarlane, and St. Joseph's College Calcutta, which grew out of St. Xavier's Day School founded more than a century ago.

In another aspect of education, namely the education of girls, also, the Christian missionaries may be justly regarded as pioneers, at least in Bengal. We learn from Adam's Report on the state of elementary education in Bengal that female education was practically unknown in Bengal at the beginning of the 19th century, and there was no public institution for the purpose. There was a superstitious idea that a girl taught to read and write would, soon after marriage, become a widow. In the whole district of Murshidabad, Adam only found 9

women who could read or write or who could merely decipher writing or sign their names. "In all the other localities of which a census was taken, no adult females were found to possess even the lowest grade of instruction", a few probable exceptions being the daughters of zamindars or some religious sects.

The first efforts towards female education in Bengal were made by the Christian missionaries, in the second decade of the 19th century. The Calcutta Female Juvenile Society, founded in 1819, taught 106 girls in six juvenile schools, in 1825, and in 1834 it maintained three more schools in Calcutta and its immediate neighbourhood in which 200 girls were taught reading, spelling, and geography. According to the birth-place of the donors these schools were named Liverpool Salem and Birmingham Schools.

In 1821 the British and Foreign Schools Society of England, in consultation with the Calcutta School Society's agent, Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Ward of the Serampore Mission, both then in England, opened a subscription for a qualified lady teacher to be sent to India, and sent out Miss. Cooke from England. She could not achieve much at the beginning, for none of the good and respectable Hindu families gave her access to their women's apartments, not to speak of sending their girls to her school. The orthodox point of view in regard to female education in reflected in the following imaginary dialogue between two girls in a pamphlet published in 1824.[9]

Question. Women have begun to read and write! How do you like this?

Answer. The thing begun by the Shahibs is for our good.

Q. But old men say that a girl who reads and writes becomes a widow.

A. This is nonsense. It is not supported by scriptures and our Puranas refer to many educated women. Take for example, the European ladies. They are educated but not widows.

Q. Out of the 800 girls reading in about fifty schools is there any one of good family?

A. No, girls of good family do not yet go to school, but read and write in secret.

Q. Let me see what you have written. I shall show it to your father-in-law.

A. What a shame! It is an infamy to show it to male members.

As a matter of fact for good many years the missionary schools were attended only by girls of very low castes.

Nevertheless, the efforts of the missionaries bore fruit, and a great deal of credit for this belongs to Miss Cooke (later Mrs. Wilson). As the funds of the Calcutta School Society were inadequate, her services were engaged by the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society. Eight schools were established in the first year, attended more or less regularly by 214 girls belonging to lower classes. More schools were added till, in 1824, there were twenty-four schools under her superintendence attended by 400 pupils. In that year the management of these schools passed to a Committee of Ladies, who formed them-

selves into a Society called the Ladies' Society for Native Female-Education in Calcutta and its vicinity. The number of schools was increased to 30 and that of the pupils to 600.

The efficient supervision of so many schools proved to be a difficult task. So, instead of multiplying such schools, it was decided to establish a Central School. Raja Baidyanath Roy made a liberal donation of Rs. 20,000, and the foundation stone of the school building was laid on May 18, 1826, by Lady Amherst. On April 1, 1828 Mr. and Mrs. Wilson took charge of the Central School with 58 pupils, but the number soon rose to 320 in 1834. An interesting feature of the school was the payment of an allowance of one pice per student to the maidservants, called Hurkarees, who collected the girls from different houses and brought them to school.

We learn from Adam's Report that there were many other missionary schools for girls in 1834, the total number probably exceeding 50. The girls in these schools were taught reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, needlework and, in some cases, religion.

When we find today the rapid multiplication of women's schools and colleges and the rush of women to higher studies, so much so that women students form a majority in some departments of the University of Calcutta, and consider the state of female education at the beginning of the 19th century, we should remember with gratitude the immense debt we owe to the Christian missionaries.

IV. AN IDEAL MISSIONARY.

Reference should be made to the individual missionaries who followed the ideal of Jesus Christ in helping the poor and the oppressed Indians even at a great sacrifice. Rev. James Long is a shining example of this class. He came to India in 1840 as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society and was in charge of the St. Paul's school founded by the Society in 1822. He was very sympathetic to the indigo-cultivators who suffered terrible oppression in the hands of the British planters. The woeful story of the miserable cultivators formed the theme of the Bengali drama, *Nīladarpaṇa*, written by Dinabandhu Mitra, which created a great stir among the public. As the author was an official, the book was an anonymous publication, for few would dare provoke the wrath of the indigo planters who became very powerful owing to the sympathy and support of the British officials. The book was translated into English under the superintendence of the Rev. J. Long. For this offence he was indicted for libel and sentenced to a fine of Rs. 1,000/- and a month's imprisonment. The spirit which inspired Long to take the great risk may be gathered from the following passage in his evidence before the Indigo Commission, 1860:

"The testimony borne throughout in the Aborigines Protection Committee

Report of the House of Commons has established the fact that throughout the world whereever the Anglo-Saxon colonists came into contact with natives, the natives were either extirpated or reduced to serfdom".[10]

The evidence of Rev. Long published in the Report of the Indigo Commission[11] shows his nobility, and genuine love for the Indians displayed by vigorous denunciation of the drawbacks of the British administration in India. His insight and sympathy for the political advancement of the Indians are manifest in the following observations.

"English education, happily spreading in the country among the natives, is giving them a sense of freedom, leavening their minds with a regard to a sense of justice and imparting to them an English tone of revulsion against oppression. It is also welding the natives of the different Presidencies into one patriotic mass, with a community of feelings on Indian subjects. . . . . This influence is radiating downwards".

If we remember that these two pronouncements were made in 1860 when there was hardly any national awakening among the Indians, we are filled with wonder and admiration and cannot but regard a missionary of the type of Rev. Long as making a great contribution to the development of nationalism in India. His condemnation of the indigo-planters, who were his fellow-countrymen, is worth quoting:

"I can assure the commissioners, that no language can depict the burning indignation with which indigo planting is and has been regarded by the native population. It alarms me seriously for the future peace of India, unless an equitable adjustment of the question is made".[12]

'Padre' Long, as he was called in Bengal, wrote many books on the people, language, literature, and history of Bengal, and on wider questions of Indian politics. Some of his books are of great interest even today as sources of history. These are:

1. Selections from unpublished records of Government for the year 1684 to 1767 inclusive, relating mainly to the social condition of Bengal, with a map of Calcutta in 1784.
2. Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works published in 1855.
3. Peeps into Social Life in Calcutta a century ago (1868).

As an indication of his wide erudition and interests it may be added that he wrote books on the 'Indigenous plants of Bengal', "Russian proverbs illustrating the social condition of peasants and women in Russia', 'Oriental Proverbs', Russian trade with India, and 'The Eastern Question in its Anglo-Indian Aspect' (1877).

It is idle to expect a large number of missionaries of the type of Rev. J. Long, but it will be hardly any exaggeration to say that Christian missionaries, devoted to real philanthropic work, particularly through educational institutions, hospitals, and relief work in natural calamities, were quite familiar in Bengal and elsewhere in India, and they brought to these works better technical knowledge and organis-

ing ability than were to be found among Indians as a general rule, about a century ago. On the whole, taking a broad view of the subject it is difficult to deny that the Christian missionaries played an important role in the regeneration or renaissance in Bengal in the 19th century.

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Kalyanmoy

Glimpses of Life and Trade on the Hugli 1720-1770

When flying in to Calcutta from the sea, today's traveller gains a vivid impression of how the city on the east bank of the Hugli dominates the scene. Two centuries and a half ago, her pre-eminence was just beginning to be noticeable. Had he had the aid of wings, a traveller would not then have seen a forest of masts of ships lying under the protection of an older and far less imposing Fort William. The masts of such large craft as were visible would have seemed clustered at various points chiefly on the opposite side of the river all the way up to Bandel. The scene which would then have met his eye was largely a consequence of the activities of European intruders who, having arrived in the sixteenth century, had been especially hard at work since the 1670's. This particular stream in the Ganges delta was becoming the life-line of Bengal and the chief contact with the outside world. As Dutch, English, French, and Danes followed the Portuguese in getting trading footholds on the banks of the Hugli, it is not strange that they thought of the river as one vast port. It was the life on the river that interested them, and the Dutch in particular viewed the scene as a whole. They, in contrast to the English, seldom spoke of their fort Gustavus or their town, Chinsura, but nearly always of their 'comptoir' (factory) Hugli. By looking at the life and trade of the river, chiefly through their eyes, we may gain an understanding of the great changes which took place within the short span of the fifty years 1720-1770.

The Dutch records afford three unusually good vantage points—1734, 1746, and 1768 for viewing the scene. With their aid, and with the supplementary information supplied by Flemings, Danes, and English, we see old ways of doing business give way to new. The autumn of 1734 is an appropirate point from which to look back into the previous fifteen years. The Dutch shipping lists for the summer trading season are usually complete. They always paid more attention to 'Moor' shipping than their fellow-Europeans for the Dutch were so much more 'country' traders than 'Europe' traders in Bengal. Seeking their information from the nawab's customs officers, they listed every large cargo. There were eleven of these in that summer—five from Surat—chiefly cotton and tobacco, plus items like mirrors and rosewater from the Persian Gulf—five from Madras with arrack and pepper from Malabar, steel from Europe via the Danish factory at Tranquebar, and tea from Canton—and finally one from Masulipatam loaded with piece-goods. All these ships save one, the *Rose,* had Muslim names, e.g. *Mahometja,* and all save one were owned by Muslims. It was not, however, the *Rose,* but the

Mahometja that belonged to an Armenian.[1] We must suppose, of course, that the Hugli was frequented by many smaller craft owned and freighted by non-Europeans at this time.

When we turn to the list of English shipping, the extent of English commercial strength is at once apparent. That summer of 1734 saw seven of the Honourable Company's ships arrive and depart—four cargoes to London valued at six or seven lakhs of rupees each, two to London via Madras valued at four lakhs each, and finally the *Heatchote* to Bombay with about a lakh in saltpetre. As for 'country' ships with British captains, the total is 23—in the 'Surat' trade 9, 'Persian Gulf' 6, 'Madras' 4, 'Eastwards' (i.e. Malay ports and Canton) 4, Sind, 1. In their effort to value the outward cargoes of these, the Dutch reckoned each 'Surat' ship at 70,000 rupees 'not counting the additional value of freight customarily put on board by Armenians, Moors, and other native merchants'. They estimated the amount shipped to Persian and Arabian ports at one million rupees, to Madras at 'well above' 25,000 rupees, to the 'Eastward' at 60,000 rupees, to Sind, 15,000 rupees—hence a total value of upwards of seventeen lakhs of rupees in outward cargoes, the bulk of it of course in Bengal cotton piece-goods,—opium, oil, saltpetre and rice being far down on the list. Such estimates well illustrate the commanding position of Western India and the Arabian Sea in Bengal's country trade at this time. They also show that captains Broadbrook, West, Hamilton, and Jonas are hard at work expanding a trade in opium and piece-goods 'eastwards'.[2] The Coromandel coast in a sense is losing out, as it stands in between the two areas of trade of most interest to Bengal country traders. This helps to explain why the majority of an ever increasing number of British country captains made their headquarters in Calcutta and referred to themselves as 'from Bengal' even though most of their time ashore was spent in Surat, Bombay, Basra or Gombroon.

The contrast between the Dutch lists of British and French 'country shipping in the Ganges' is striking—ten French country ships, all save three engaged in voyages to Goa, Surat, Persia and Red Sea ports. Of the three remaining, two are bringing cowries from the Maldives, a trade to which the French are giving special attention, and the other ship is on a voyage to Achin in Sumatra. The disparity between the activities of the French and English East India companies in the Hugli was not so great. Chandernagore saw five French Company ships that season, but only two came direct from France. The other engaged in the country trade en route to and from Europe.[3] Since the Dutch Company itself ordinarily sent no more than two or three ships to Bengal at this time, and the Danes, Portuguese, and other Europeans only an occasional ship, the greater strength of the English is readily apparent.

This growth of English commerce in the Hugli was of ever increasing concern to the Dutch. If we turn back to the 1720's, we see that the lists of 'Moor' shipping were larger and the Dutch Company's own trade in the river was much greater.

This is reflected in the letters from the Dutch chiefs in Bengal to the governors-general in Batavia, especially in a letter of November 8, 1729 referring to the 'unheard of' amounts of silver the English are bringing in to develop their trade in gruff goods.[4] By the early 1730's, the Dutch chiefs are complaining of the intense competition from both English and French which prevents them from meeting the 'demands' sent from Batavia.[5] Nevertheless, there is as yet no fear of English *political* power. The nawab's authority is respected by all Europeans. In 1727, the English East India Company at Calcutta agreed not to levy consulage on 'Moors', 'Gentoos', 'Armenians', or 'any other subject of the Mogul' and promptly took steps to prevent the abuse of the *dastaks* which exempted their own goods from the nawab's duties.[6] The significance of the weakening of local authority which greatly increased European military power on the Hugli in 1725 seems not to have been appreciated by contemporaries. In fact the Dutch, having provided their convoys of saltpetre and piece-goods from Patna to Chinsura with military escort for five years, engaged in an earnest effort in 1730 to dispense with such expedients but were unable to do so.[7]

In deciding to maintain these escorts, the Dutch in all probability added an entirely new element to the life on the river—one which was to have great future importance. There were three hundred of these men, and forces of this size sent from Batavia, were preponderantly Malay under European officers. It would thus appear that, for ten years or so in the 1720's and 1730's, the Dutch had more non-European mercenaries in Bengal than the English, for the two English companies of troops at old Fort William in 1724 were all Europeans with the exception of 20 lascars and 50 or 60 'Portuguese' Eurasians—a total of approximately 350 troops. It is unlikely that the situation had markedly changed ten years later when there were three companies, Captain Holcomb's, Captain Lloyd's and Captain Hamilton's.[8] Despite their respect for the nawab's authority, neither the Dutch nor the English could curtail their military expenditure. Spurred by orders from London and Amsterdam to do so, they investigated thoroughly, but concluded that, whatever the level of military expense was, it must continue until the country was less 'unsettled'.

In the 1720's and early 1730's on the Hugli, the Europeans' own affairs were more settled than those of the country. It was not a time when wars in Europe embittered Europeans' relations with each other in Bengal. Apart from those engendered by 'Ostenders' and other interlopers, their quarrels were of their own making and were usually confined to those petty disputes which were so common among groups of men cooped up in tiny disease-ridden trading posts. On the whole, company servants, free merchants, and sea-captains had easy relations with each other, and Europeans of the 'lower orders' served English, Dutch, French, Danes or 'Ostenders' with a catholicity which is astonishing. Desertion from one service to another was the order of the day, and the records are full of agreements for rendition of 'deserters' usually with assurance of 'full pardon' because of the

high mortality and constant demand for European sailors, soldiers, caulkers and carpenters.[9]

Since fortunes to be acquired in Bengal were still modest, the European community was not plagued by the envies and jealousies and blatant corruption so characteristic of the later period of conquest. Transferring one's assets to London was a slow process in any case; the availability of 'foreign channels' of remittance was not great, and it is clear that more than one 'returned' Company servant marveled that he had undertaken so onerous a career. The case of Robert Adams, who made his money chiefly from country trade between Bengal and the Malabar coast in the 1720's illustrates this. On January 24, 1730, he wrote his friend Jerry Jones, "I should not like to be obliged to go to India again to make such a fortune."[10] Two years later, he was still struggling with his attorneys in Bengal, and obliged to leave 80,000 rupees in Calcutta at interest to be gradually brought home through the Company's bills of exchange.[11] As for petty corruption at the same time, it was Robert Adams who interceded in January 1731 for Alexander Orme 'late chief at Anjengo but now residing at Calcutta with a numerous family', including the future historian Robert Orme then aged two. Alexander had in 1727 incurred the Directors' displeasure because of 'miscarriages' of funds and 'vain amusements', but Adams succeeded in reversing the order for his deportation and in getting permission for him to practise as a surgeon in Calcutta until a vacancy opened on the Bengal establishment.[12]

The chief source of excitement for Europeans on the Hugli was then provided by the quarrelsome mélange of Flemings, Scotsmen, Swedes, Frenchmen, Irish Jacobites and renegade Englishmen usually lumped together in the records under the designation 'Ostenders'. Their activities are well known during the years before the Ostend Company was suspended, but the extent to which they struggled on into the 1730's and beyond is not generally realized. The most active of these men was Francois de Schonamille of Antwerp who kept the Emporer Charles VI's flag flying at Bankibazar long after that unfortunate monarch had first suspended and then abolished the Ostend Company's East India trading privileges.[13] Schonamille lived by country-trading and by assisting those English and Dutch Company servants who were willing for the sake of private gain to deal with the 'Ostenders'.[14] It was he who was the go-between for the two ostensibly 'Polish' ships the *Neptune* and the *Cheval Marin* which arrived in the river in the trading season of 1729-30. He gave refuge to Pierre Strebel, the supercargo of the *Neptune* after the ships were prevented from sailing for Europe by the English and Dutch. This affair illustrates the bizarre aspects of such attempts to circumvent the suspension of the Ostend Company, such as the secret negotiations by the Fleming Van Houttem for registering the ownership of the ships in the name of a burgher of Linz, Jean Adam Pruner, and the hiring of an English captain, John Combes, who appears to have really believed that the Ostend Company shareholders were not involved until, on entering the Hugli in late July 1729, he found he was expected to take

orders from Alexander Hume, the Scotsman still in charge of the Ostend Company's affairs.

A furious quarrel thereupon broke out between Combes and Hume. It is of interest that Combes, confronted with hostility from the English and the Dutch, was all for using force while Hume was for caution and dependence on help from the nawab of Bengal. Hearing that the English Company was arming three ships against his two, Combes's plan was to haul the *Neptune* 'into some creek where we can lie athwart with all our guns on one side, and where they may not be able to approach us but by coming head to us; and at the same time Captain Braecq [of the *Cheval Marin*] should arm his ship . . . and while they are attacking us to burn all their ships at Callicutte [sic] and then stop all their trade that comes from Patna'. Months later, in November, when his ships were still lying under blockade off Bankibazar this was still his plan, he would have sacrificed the smaller *Cheval Marin* as a fire-ship to be followed by eight rafts covered with kindling wood soaked in oil and sent her down stream, with the Polish flag plying bravely at her masthead, to wreak havoc among the English Company's ships. Hume, however, struck to the view that the 'Moors have offered to let me have what number of men I please should we come to action, and withal assure me of joining in humbling the proud [the English].' All the while, both men still argued angrily over whether negotiations with the nawab should be carried on in the name of the Ostend Company or of His Polish Majesty and whether the twenty bottles of choice sherry on the *Neptune* should cheer Hume, Schonamille, Strebel and the other 'Ostenders' at Bankibazar or be kept aboard for emergencies on the voyage homeward. After the *Cheval Marin* had been captured in a vain effort to get down the river, and a deputation to the nawab in December 1729 had failed, Combes still believed the opportunity to use force successfully had been lost by too much delay.[15] Hume, at the end of the next trading season, went to Europe in a French ship, leaving Schonamille in charge at Bankibazar. Schonamille's correspondence with the Dutch chief at Chinsura shows that he lived well, was free in his hospitality to adventurers of all sorts, did business 'in council' and considered himself on a par with the heads of the Dutch, French, and English East India Companies' factories.[16]

When we look at the commercial life on the Hugli in 1745 just after the outbreak of hostilities between English and French, the increasing strength of the English is everywhere apparent. English country voyages have risen to approximately thirty, and trade to the 'eastward' is engaging more attention. The Dutch lists of 'Moor' shipping are shorter, and the Armenian and 'Portuguese' participation in them is greater. A good example is the huge Armenian-owned cargo of porcelain and other China goods brought into the river on August 2, 1745. French country trade before its disruption by the war, is still at the same level as in 1734.[17] The English Company's servants are expanding their private contacts with other Europeans. There is evidence of their need to resort secretly to 'foreign channels'

of remittance to Europe. The country is more than ever 'unsettled'; even before the outbreak of Anglo-French war, the necessity of military protection for convoys of goods down river was taken as a matter of course and no European advocated curtailment of military, expenditure.

A most interesting development is the increasing influence of the Danes. Until 1744, the 'Ostenders' have lived on largely with their help, and with that of Swedish East India Company voyages which were a 'cover' for the activity of Scotsmen, Flemings, and Swedes formerly associated with the Ostend Company. In their unsuccessful efforts to re-establish their settlement at Serampore, the Danish East India Company sought the aid of Schonamille at Bankibazar. The contacts with Bengal of the Danish East India Company's factors at Tranquebar were expanding. The chief stimulus for this was the market for the superior qualities of iron brought from Europe to Tranquebar in the Danish Company's ships. The Danish governors and their 'seconds' at Tranquebar were in constant correspondence with the English governors and Company servants at Madras. The Madras Company servants and 'free merchants' were in turn bringing their correspondents in the 'country trading' community in Bengal into this trade.[18]

A glance at these activities in the trading seasons of 1736-37 and 1737-38 will give an idea of what was going on. In July 1736, Nazar Jacob Jan, an Armenian merchant in Madras, wrote to Governor Panck at Tranquebar in Portuguese that he was acting for Thomas Braddyl, then second in the Calcutta Council, Richard Eyre, and Thomas Weston, all servants of the English East India Company 'persons of great discretion and of sufficient standing as merchants dealing in goods which find a market in Bengal, especially salt, tutenague, and copper.[19] This situation apparently led Panck to send the *Christian VI* into the Hugli to load saltpetre and open negotiations with the nawab regarding Serampore using Schonamille's continued presence at Bankibazar as an opportunity to give the ship a base independent of the English, Dutch, and French. Panck's envoys, Messers. Soetmann and Gremista carried letters to the Governor at Fort William, to Messers. Braddyl, Eyre and Weston, and to the faujdar at Hugli. The negotiations with the nawab were fruitless even though Schonamille went to Murshidabad where he claimed to have circumvented the machinations of the nawab's diwan whom he regarded as the most unreasonable and avaricious Hindu that 'ever was born'. Serampore remained in the nawab's possession. Soetmann and Gremista had to content themselves with a fairly successful trading venture. In his letters to Panck describing the *Christian VI's* sojourn in the river, Schonamille stressed that she had been able to trade on a 'four per cent' duty basis plus the distribution of small *douceurs* to the nawab's officers. The other 'nations' in the river officially did what they could to oppose her trade, but she sold nearly all her cargo. He attributed the failure of the negotiations for the re-establishment of the Danish rights at Serampore entirly to the 'execrable Moor' government. Schonamille also dwelt on his own plight, bereft of all support from Ostend or Vienna. What had

impressed him, looking back on twelve years in Bengal, was a decline of sale prices for goods from Europe and the increased costs of exports because of heavier administrative expense and the 'extraordinary extortions of the Moors'.[20]

We get another picture of Schonamille's role on the Hugli from the letters of the Flemish merchant André-Jacques Flanderin of Ostend who went out to Bengal as 'second supercargo' in the Swedish East India Company's ship *Koning Frederik* in the season of 1740-41. At Cadiz, he was fortunate to add to his own little trading capital by borrowing 10,000 pesos of a Spanish lady, Dona Clara de Velarrony Polo. He promised her a 30% profit. By January 8, 1741 he was at Bankibazar taking Schonamille's advice and corresponding widely because the ship had to wait over a season in order to collect a full cargo. He wrote to a French country trader at Madras for piece-goods, to the factors at Chandernagore and to Scotsmen and French living at Bandel for funds offering 24 stuivers per rupee to anyone who wanted to make remittance to Europe. He made similar overtures to the Dutch factors at Chinsura. He described Schonamille as completely without support from Vienna living entirely by his own country trading and service to European adventurers. Flanderin's letters show that Ostend remained the center of communication for traders formerly connected with the Ostend Company. Such traders were soon, however, to lose their foothold at Bankibazar.[21] In 1744, Schonamille, a year after marrying his son to Ursule Vincent, one of Dupliex's step-daughters,[22] fell victim to a quarrel with the faujdar of Hugli who is said to have been egged on by the Dutch. Schonamille unwisely attacked the faujdar after refusing to pay a fine for alleged collusion with Maratha raiders in Bengal. The nawab's forces thereupon seized Bankibazar. Schonamille escaped to Syriam in Burma where he soon met a violent death,[23] and the flag of the Holy Roman Empire ceased to wave from a European trading factory on the Hugli.

The events of 1743-45 foreshadow those to come. Although fortunes are not great among the English country captains and Company servants, they are growing larger than the amount to which the Company's channels of remittance can easily accommodate. Soon facilities for respondentia such as those offered by André-Jacques Flanderin will not be enough. On January 8, 1746, the Dutch Council at Chinsura received from William Davis, second in Council at Calcutta, 39,246 rupees, 7 annas and 6 pice and a bill was duly drawn at 28 stuivers per rupee for 54945 guilders and 1 stuiver but Davis agreed that his agents in Amsterdam would be content with 50,000 guilders. The supposition is strong that Davis had to offer a bribe of nearly 5,000 guilders to make this remittance.[24] This is a harbinger of the future, and there are other straws in the wind. In 1746, at Chinsura, the Dutch Company took into its sea service 'Jan Juffrey' of Peterborough. 'William Jongh' of Leith, and eight other English sailors, including 'William Thegon' of 'Bergupontweed' [Berwick upon Tweed].[25] On November 15 of the same year, the Dutch chief at Chinsura wrote to Baron van Imhoff at Batavia that

the English country ship *Johanna Elizabeth* had brought so much Arabian coffee into the Hugli that it would be pointless to send any from Batavia.[26] It may be that incidents like this illustrate the trend of the times better than Baron Von Imhoff's new regulations of 1743 relaxing the restrictions on private Dutch country trading or than the outbreak of Anglo-French war itself.[27]

Let us move on to the late 1760's and see the vast changes to which the steady and accelerating growth of English power on the Hugli has led. Plassey and Buxar have been fought; Bengali villagers tilling their fields have become accustomed to the sight of European officers leading Indian sepoys in the service of East India companies. The Dutch at Chinsura, defeated by Colonel Forde in 1759, have brought Malay mercenaries into Bengal for the last time. English country shipping more than ever predominates along the *ghats,* and a servant of the Dutch East India Company sits down to write a 'memorie' in French on 'all the various injuries to their commerce of which the European nations established in Bengal have reason to complain against the English'. He began by saying that before the war of 1756-63, European nations were still more or less on an equal footing in their business dealings with Indians. Since the war, the English have monopolized the trade in saltpetre of which Bengal annually produces 200,000 maunds. They have virtually done the same with opium, although they need only 200 chests annually for their factory at Benkulen in Sumatra. In this article, the Dutch and French should join forces to secure 1950 chests, 1200 for the Dutch and 750 for the French. Even more iniquitous was the formation of an association of rapacious English East India Company servants for controlling the marketing of salt and arrack levying tribute on all private merchants, English included. This had already caused such complaints in London that trade in arrack and tobacco became free in September 1768. Nevertheless, the trade of French, Dutch and Danes is being slowly constricted. Non-British 'country' voyages to Mocha were no longer possible; Armenians no longer dared to use non-British ships. All Europeans had increasingly to use the good offices of British 'country captains' and country merchants.[28] These were not be easily acquired; the redoubtable Captain Edward Mackintosh later wrote to Ole Bie, the Danish governor at Serampore, 'No man of character or experience would ever leave the English service to engage [to command your country ship] for less terms than those customary by them'.[29]

For the Dutch and Danes, there was no escape from collaboration with the English. This was especially true of the Danes who had succeeded in re-establishing their factory at Serampore in the mid 1750's. In 1761-62 their new Governor De Marchis reported that the English were masters of everything.[30] Desperately short of cash, the Danes turned to their advantage the pressing needs of the English 'shakers of the pagoda tree' for secret channels of remittance. The marketing of Danish bills of exchange prepared in Tranquebar then began in earnest. By 1767, Major John Call's letters from Madras to Governor Abbestie

in Tranquebar give a clear picture of what is happening. On January 25, 1767, he wrote:

> By late orders from our Company, their military and civil servants are most strictly prohibited from receiving in future from any person more than ten per cent per annum for money lent and at the same time they have not only reduced the value of the pagoda in sterling money but have rendered it difficult to get any bills for money paid into the public treasury at either of the Presidencies. Many people therefore are anxious to find other means of getting their money to England as they have not now the same advantages they had in keeping it in India. Among others, I would remit about 50,000 pags. And as it probably may be in your power to put me in a way how to do it, so as to get 8s. or 8s. 2*d*. for every pagoda I beg the favour of your advice and assistance. Perhaps I might be able to send money on your ships at respondentia or get bills on your company for money paid at Tranquebar, in Bengal or in China. Or probably I may be able to send some goods on your ships at freight or at a certain premium from your Company or to purchase the privilege of the Armenian who has permission, I understand, to occupy a part of your ship annually.[31]

Within ten years, entries in the Danish East India Company's books reflecting such remittances from Madras and Calcutta will no longer be rarity.[32]

The writers at the Dutch factory at Chinsura were likewise busy with such entries. From the lists of 'Assignatien gatrokken uit Indië compiled in 1773, we can watch the English names multiply and see that the season of 1767-68 marks the time when they really spurt upward—representing from Bengal at least one million florins [£91,000 approx.].[33] The name of Robert Clive appears, along with Lady Clive and John Walsh, in 1766, and Warren Hastings in 1767, in the midst of forty-one others, nearly all familiar to readers of the works of Robert Orme, who himself even before Plassey was engaged in country trading in collaboration with the Danes.[34]

Likewise by this season of 1767-68, the interrelations among Europeans and Indians have led to the beginnings on the Hugli of that institution which has contributed so much to the economic history of Bengal and of India as a whole—the 'agency house'. The Danish records afford us an unusual opportunity to see the prospectus of one of these early agency houses. On January 1, 1768, Messrs. Archibald Keir, Peter Reed and Joseph Cator opened a house of business in Calcutta. On February 16, they issued what today would be called a prospectus, in which they announced that they commanded a substantial capital and that three of them would always be in Calcutta. They will charge 21/2% commission on 'bale and piece goods', 5% commission on 'gruff goods', 1% on 'receiving money', 1% on 'paying money'. Anyone depositing non-perishable goods may, after ten days, borrow up to 3/4 of the value at 10% per annum to be paid after sale of the goods. Anyone sending goods from up-country may draw up to

GL 55842

three-quarters their value, bills 'on us' payable 30 days after safe arrival of goods; payment to be made by the house from proceeds of sale, interest to apply as above. And to answer what demands may be made, the partnership on opening of the house will have ready in cash a sum of not less than one lack and 50,000 rupees which their stocks will enable them to increase as far as three or four lack if they find that so much shall be required. On August 1, 1768, they enclosed this prospectus in a letter to Governor Abbestie at Tranquebar saying that Mr. Archibald Keir was about to go to Europe, and they were adding Thomas Gibson 'of this place, Merchant' to their house of trade.[35]

These have been but brief glimpses of life and trade on the Hugli—signs along the road to Plassey and beyond. Further investigation will surely reveal more and more of them. The 'revolution' in Bengal in the late 1750's was not as sudden as it seems. It had long been in the making—how long, Robert Clive may not have realized when he wrote on July 17, 1758 to B. L. Ziegenbalg, the Danish governor at Serampore, warning him that, in case of any unneutral conduct on his part towards the French, "I shall represent the affair to the Nabob, and as I have the honour of being highly distinguished with his favour, any representation from me cannot but be exceeding fatal in its consequences to you."[36]

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31. D.R. As.Ko. 1358, f. 2., see also 1359, f. 92.
32. For typical bill lists with English names, see D.R. As.Ko. 577, ff. 212, 221. of the Danish East India Company's journal for 1777-78.
33. K.A. 10, 575 'Assignatien Gatrokken uit Indië 1755-1773'. *passim*.
34. Tyso Saul Hanock, Henry Strachey. For Orme's private trade, see D.R. As. Ko. 1356, Robert Orme the Gov. Krog. Sept. 6, 1755.
35. 'D. R. As. Ko. 1359. p. 89.
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Holden Furber

Holt Mackenzie—Forgotten Man of Bengal

In the twenty-five years from 1810 to 1835 there are few names which appear more often or to greater effect in the public papers concerning Bengal than that of Holt Mackenzie. His was a major influence in shaping the land policy of the North-west provinces and so by implication, of the Punjab, and a prominent influence in deciding every other important issue of the day. But there are few references to him in the standard histories of modern India where authors have preferred the more dramatic names of a Malcolm, a Metcalfe or an Elphinstone. He finds no mention in the Englishman's literary pantheon, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, though his literary and rather tiresome father, who was essentially less important, is fully treated. No one has essayed his biography, as in the case of most Anglo-Indian worthies, though his father has had two books written about him.[1] He died the senior Privy Councillor of Great Britain; he is the forgotten man of modern India and Bengal. It is high time that his name was rescued from oblivion and his achievement placed in perspective.

What we know of his work at present is due to the attention of three modern scholars. Dr. Amales Tripathi[2] has revealed the important part played by Holt Mackenzie in financial matters in the eighteen-twenties. Professor B. B. Misra[3] has dealt with his revenue work in the Bengal Presidency between 1819 and 1830. Dr. S. E. Stokes[4] has considered him as an agent in impressing utilitarian ideas on the land and revenue policies of the Bengal government and on the general structure of the Government of India. From him also we get a glimpse of his personality. But none of them have dealt with his career, his personality and his influence as a whole. In each case a particular aspect of him is incidental to some larger theme.

But as soon as one begins to treat him on this larger basis a tantalising difficulty arises. Apart from his official papers, to be found in the government records, Parliamentary papers and printed collections, little material survives. Even when a clue to his private papers appears, it is apt to vanish like a will-o' the wisp on a nearer approach. Thus the Scottish National Archives contains, in the collection of papers concerning his father, Henry Mackenzie, a volume of letters said to be to and from William Holt Mackenzie. But an inspection has revealed them in fact to be letters to and from one of his brothers, William Henry Mackenzie. The obituary notice in *The Times*[5] omits, what at the time was frequently provided, a portrait of the subject, while a well executed set of portraits of Calcutta worthies commences soon after he had left Calcutta.[5a] Though

married, he left no descendants and it has not been possible to trace the fate of his widow, whose second husband he was.

What then is the basis of our knowledge? We have first his official writings, which are to be found in the records of the Government of Bengal now in the India Office library and the National Archives of India. They take the form of "Notes", "Memoranda" and "Minutes", the former predominating, because his position compelled him usually to address his views to superiors. Many of these are printed in Parliamentary Papers in the years 1830-35, those of particular importance being his Memorandum on the progress of the settlement of the North-west provinces in 1826, and his Minutes to the Civil Finance Committee in 1830 on the whole structure of the Government of India. In addition the Parliamentary Papers contain his evidence to the Committee of Enquiry for the renewal of the Company's *Charter* in the session of 1831-32. This covers most fields of government activity and is remarkable for its stored information lucidly expressed, its easy argumentation and general command of the subjects concerned. On free trade his evidence was said to be "murderous" to the Directors' views. Further printed sources are printed selections of documents. The two volumes of *Selections from the Revenue Records, North West Provinces,* from 1818 to 1820, and from 1822-33, printed respectively in 1870 and 1872, contain Mackenzie's famous *Memorandum* of 1 July 1819 which formed the basis of the whole settlement of the North-West provinces, and also of his reputation as an administrator. They also contain the Resolution and Regulation which he drafted embodying his proposals, and the *Memorandum* of 19 Oct. 1826. Sir H. Sharp's *A Selection from the Education Records of the Government of India 1776-1840,* contains his *Minute* on Education on the formation of the Committee of Public Instruction in 1823. Other important material, particularly on trade and finance, which has been used by Dr. Tripathi, still reposes in the governmental records.

So much for our knowledge of Mackenzie's official work. Materials for our knowledge of him as a man are scanty but something is beginning to emerge. There are stray references to him in the Bentinck and other papers, some of which have been mentioned by Dr. Stokes.[6] There is a letter from Sir John Malcolm warning Bentinck against him as being able but doctrinaire. One cannot but wonder whether Malcolm had Mackenzie in mind when he penned his well-known description of the Calcutta civilian.

> "Were I to remain in India I do not think there is a human being (certainly no Nabob or Maharajah) whom I should dread half so much as an able Calcutta civilian, whose travels are limited to two or three hundred miles, with a hookah in his mouth, some good but abstract maxims in his head, the Regulations in his right hand, the Company's Charter in his left, and a quire of wire wove foolscap before him".[7]

Malcolm wrote this in 1821, when he could have known of Holt Mackenzie's Memorandum of 1 July 1819, which was at once acclaimed a masterpiece and took

the opposite line to Malcolm's in land management. He could also have known of the activities of Holt's friend Thoby Prinsep as well as of more senior secretaries like Edmondstone and Dowdeswell and his earlier bête noir, Sir George Barlow himself. We cannot therefore assert that Holt Mackenzie was the direct subject of this literary squib, but in the light of Malcolm's later remarks about him we can certainly suggest that he fitted in with it. If Holt did not occasion the description, the description, in Malcolm's eyes, was illustrated by Holt. Finally we have the evidence of Henry Thoby Prinsep's *Autobiography* of which a typescript copy is now in the India Office Library.[8] Holt, he said, was "my most intimate friend" in his early days in Writers Buildings in Calcutta and for many years afterwards.

In the absence of the discovery of Holt Mackenzie's personal papers we can only hope for small additions to this *corpus* of materials. Further search amongst the Bentinck papers may shed fresh light. A more hopeful line of enquiry, perhaps, would be Lord Macaulay's papers and those of Charles Grant the younger. Mackenzie was a colleague of Macaulay's at the Board of Control from 1832 until Macaulay left for his Indian appointment, and he continued in office until 1834 under Charles Grant. The correspondence of contemporary directors might also yield something, for they had much to do with him during the Charter discussions of 1830-1833. His evidence was not only voluminous, but lucid, persuasive and singularly well-informed. It by no means always suited the directorial book and must at times have caused them both concern and annoyance. The last public trace of Mackenzie is to be found in the reports of the debates of the Court of Proprietors in 1853 and 1857-58 during the last Charter discussions and those preceding the abolition of the Company in 1858.

The figure which emerges from the meagre materials is not very clear, but some sort of picture appears. He was clearly an eager student, quick to pick up languages and an appreciative pupil of Malthus at the East India College. He was equally clearly an intellectual who delighted in reflection, argument and speculation. His style, which has a character of its own, in addition to its persuasiveness, lucidity and the grace which carries knowledge easily, displays a certain optimism and faith in humanity as of a man of genial temperament. It has also a certain warm humanity and practicality which is far removed from Malcolm's typical Calcutta civilian. This warmth increases in his later official years until it becomes, in his final *Minutes,* something of a humanitarian flame, and it still burns in his last speeches to the Court of Proprietors in 1857-58. His friendship with Thoby Prinsep adds little to this picture, because he was a fellow intellectual. But it suggests a cordial and co-operative nature, for Prinsep records that he "generally passed half my day in his office, assisting him in this work" (of preparing Regulations in the Territorial Department).[9] He won the confidence of Lord Hastings, to whom he attributed his early advancement, of Lord Amherst who, according to Prinsep, "almost exclusively relied"[10] on his judgement during

Amherst's up-country tour of 1826-27 and also of Lord William Bentinck, who regretted his departure in pointed terms.[11] "He is, I should say", wrote Bentinck, "one of the ablest men in India".[12] He was said to be "of retired and studious habits, and gifted with a keen and comprehensive mind".[13] So we can envisage a man of lively and capacious mind with a doctrinaire turn, of industrious and methodical habits, fond of congenial conversation and company, but with little taste for the fashionable life of the Presidency city and lacking, perhaps, in the caacity for advancing his own interests possessed by many contemporaries of inferior talents. He was a man of principle, who almost certainly jeopardised his standing with the Directors by the free expression of his views. He had a human warmth uncommon in the pure intellectual which made him a champion of the Indian peasant beyond all his theorising. That he was more interested in his various tasks than in the prestige or emoluments of office is suggested by the long list of his creative government papers, and by his long and contented retirement. Though he was 88 at his death in 1876 his estate is listed in the probate of his will at the comfortable but not immoderate figure of "under £30,000".[14]

William Holt Mackenzie was born at Edinburgh on 27 August, 1787. He was the eleventh and youngest child of Henry Mackenzie and his wife Penuel, daughter of Sir Ludovic Grant.[15] Henry was the Collector of Taxes for Scotland, and was a friend of Henry Dundas, the first President of the Board of Control. No doubt this connection was helpful in placing his sons, three out of six entering the East India Company's service. But he attained fame as an essayist and the author of *A Man of Feeling*, published in 1774. He was one of the Edinburgh literary coterie and it is claimed for him that he was the first man to recognise the literary genius of Robert Burns.[16] Holt[17] joined Haileybury College early in 1806 where he came under the influence of Malthus, the College's Professor of Political Economy. He was gazetted a Writer on 21 July 1807 and arrived in Calcutta on 19 May 1808. He passed out of Fort William College in February 1810, as Head of the Year, having won three Medals of Merit for proficiency in Hindi, Persian and Bengali. For this he received an encomium from Lord Minto. He also registered the first of his financial feats by leaving the College with a debt of less than Rs. 2000.[18] After holding a number of junior posts and going on sick leave for a time, presumably marking the end of the process of acclimatisation, he became Acting Secretary in the Territorial department in November 1815. Lord Moira (later Lord Hastings) was looking for promising young men at the time and found two of them in Holt and Thoby Prinsep. The two were friends from their Fort William days and both considered that they owed their early promotion to Lord Hastings. When Thomas Fortescue took over the permanent incumbency in May 1816 Holt received a eulogy from the Governor-General. But Fortescue (later to attain immortality by his report on the administration of the Delhi Territory, in 1820, after ten months residence there)[19] shortly retired on sick leave and Holt was recalled to act again. In May 1817 he was

confirmed in the office and reigned un-challenged until he left India in December 1830. In fact it might be said that he was the Territorial department, for he took it over shortly after its formation and it was abolished after his departure. These fifteen years (from 1815) together with four more spent in London immediately thereafter, formed the creative period of Holt's long life. The department was formed in November 1815, on the proposition of the Chief Secretary George Dowdeswell and it lasted until Mackenzie's retirement. It united the financial and revenue branches of the administration and included the management of the salt monololy and opium affairs.[20] Mackenzie had thus the whole financial and land administration under his control and may be described as a Minister of Finance and Land working under the control of a directorate consisting of the Governor-General and his Supreme Council. Both the land revenue and financial questions were then in a fluid condition, for in the former case regular revenue settlements of the North-Western provinces had to be organised, and in the latter an endemic financial crisis persisted owing to the repeated straining of the Company's resources. Mackenzie's position was thus a key one in the administration and there followed a series of creative state papers which will be considered a little later.

This period was broken in 1826-27 by a tour up-country with the Governor-General, Lord Amherst, as his principal-private secretary. It is clear that he attained a great ascendancy over Amherst, for Prinsep not only records that it was on his "judgment the Governor-General almost exclusively relied" but also quotes a note from Amherst "that my arguments had quite satisfied him and *what was of more consequence would,* he doubted not, satisfy Mr. Holt Mackenzie of the expediency of the course I suggested".[21] This journey with its new experiences seems to have had an effect of enlargement on Mackenzie's mind and character. It was noticed by Prinsep in these terms.[23]

> "Before I went to England, I had worked in association with Holt Mackenzie in all the measures he proposed for the reform of the departments entrusted to him. We acted then on the truly conservative principle of providing a remedy for every evil or defect that was shown to exist, but were careful that our remedy should not go beyond the disease. The principle now adopted however was to consider every defect established to be reason sufficient for abandoning the entire system and trying a new one. Holt Mackenzie, especially after his return from Hindostan, whither he had accompanied Lord Amherst, brought back opinions subversive of most of the recognised principles on which the Government of the country had been heretofore administered; but he failed to convince me of the wisdom of the changes he proposed and now assisted to carry out."

Holt Mackenzie's hour came when Lord William Bentinck arrived as Amherst's successor in July 1823. With a character rather sourly described by Prinsep as

"so deeply imbued with a love of change for change's sake",[23] in other words, that of a convinced and energetic reformer, Bentinck found in Mackenzie a willing coadjutor, and one able to convert his general ideas into logical and convincing administrative form. The partnership lasted over two years until Mackenzie returned to England in December 1830. During that time he was the mainspring of the Civil Finance Committee, using that body as a platform for advocating reforms on the plea of economy and the plea of economy as an occasion for reviewing the whole structure of the Company's government.

During the years 1831 and 1832 he was occupied in giving evidence before the parliamentary committee considering the East India Company's affairs as the prelude to the new Charter Act. The evidence was wide-ranging, including the army, Fort William college, and transit duties besides finance and the land revenue system. It was characteristically lucid, well-informed and persuasive and constitutes his third period of creative activity. "Charles Grant", wrote Metcalfe to Bentinck,[24] "will I should think bring Holt Mackenzie into the Board of Control. At all events he will apply to him for information and H.M. will pour it into him in torrents." Charles Grant, the President of the Board of Control in the reforming Whig ministry, did in fact bring Holt into the Board as Assistant Commissioner in 1832 where he worked with Macaulay in preparing the Charter Act of 1833. But when it came to the question of rewards Holt Mackenzie was unlucky. Macaulay was appointed to the new Law Membership of the Calcutta Supreme Council, Charles Grant aspired to the Governor-Generalship and when the Directors were unresponsive was solaced with a peerage as Lord Glenelg.[25] He proposed Holt Mackenzie for a Supreme Councillorship in Calcutta and his own brother Robert for the Governorship of Bombay; when the Court objected to both, he compromised in favour of his brother for Bombay. Holt had previously been rejected by the Directors for the Governorship of Madras.[26] According to Grant in a letter to Bentinck, the late Chairs (Messrs. Campbell Marjoribanks and William Wigram) "had a violent prejudice, even hatred, against him". When the new Chair came in (Messrs. John Lock and Henry Tucker) an express was sent to him, but he had already left London.[27] Perhaps as a compensation for these disappointments he was made a Privy Councillor, a distinction in the absence of any other honour or employment which he shared with Warren Hastings. When he died he was the senior member of Queen's Privy Council.

In 1834 at the age of 47, Holt Mackenzie gave up his Commissionership and went into retirement. We are told that he remained active in mind and body until shortly before his death on 31 March, 1876.[28] During this long period the only trace we have of him is that he became Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1874,[29] attended the Privy Council when Indian business was transacted, and took part in the debates of the Court of Proprietors in connection with the Charter discussions of 1853 and the British government's proposal to abolish the Company's government in 1857-58. From the reports it is clear that he then had

lost neither his clarity of mind, nor his warmth of heart nor his courage of opinion. "The first duty of government", he said, "is to give ample protection to life and property, cheap, speedy and efficient justice, a good police, and a guarantee to the people of their ancient rights and customs".[30] He opposed a motion condemning the transfer of government to the Crown and charged the Company with having, through its Permanent Settlement of Bengal, transferred property rights of a country of thirty million people and worth thirty million pounds a year to a small minority.[31] His proposal to refer both the draft India Bills to Sir John Melville and John Stuart Mill for their preparation of a better one was negatived. We hear no more of him during the remaining twenty years of his life.

A number of points arise from this recital of Holt Mackenzie's career. The first turning point is his journey up-country with Lord Amherst in 1826-27, which occupied twenty months. It would seem, from a comparison of his papers before and after, as well as from Prinsep's complaints, that this was something of a watershed in his experience. He had been guiding a singularly malleable governor-general through areas largely unknown and dealing with some matters hitherto unfamiliar to him.[32] He had to match his theoretical knowledge to the dusty actuality in revenue matters, and to find political theory for the facts of policy with regard to the Indian states. Such an experience must either develop or constrict a man's character; in Mackenzie's case it clearly did the former. We find thereafter a self-confidence which made his arguments more authoritative if not more cogent and his state papers more compelling or weighty as they had always been compendious. His concern for the masses has an added compassion and his insistence on their rights an increasing urgency. We can perhaps see also, in his financial papers, a growing impatience with the restrictive and monopolistic tendencies of the Court of Directors. This stronger spirit with its enlarged horizons then found a congenial partner in Lord William Bentinck who, according to Prinsep, "loved change for the sake of change". His two years with Bentinck were perhaps the most fruitful in his life. This brings us to the second question. If this collaboration was so successful, why did Holt go on leave in December 1830? In the absence of his private papers or any explanation in those of others the reason can only be hazarded. It may be suggested that, having risen so fast and achieved such distinction, and having held one of the principal secretaryships for the unprecedented period of fifteen years, he considered that it was time for promotion although there were other members of the service still senior to him. He could hardly have cavilled at the appointment of Butterworth Bayley, who was eight years senior to him in the service, to the Supreme Council in 1825, nor to that of Sir Charles Metcalfe, seven years his senior and with a most distinguished record, in 1827. But the promotion of Alexander Blunt in 1830 was different and he may well have thought that here was a case when talent should be preferred to senior mediocrity. I doubt whether his supposed candidature for the Madras

governorship could have influenced him much one way or the other for the chief candidate was Sir Charles Metcalfe himself, and Holt Mackenzie must have recognised had superior claims.[33]

There remains the question of the hostility of the Directors which prevented Holt's appointment to the Supreme Council in 1834, presumably as Metcalfe's successor. Charles Grant's report on the Directors provides a clue and we have also the information that some of his evidence before the Parliamentary committee was regarded as "murderous".[34] Why was this? His revenue activities can hardly have been the cause, for they had secured high encomiums from the Company and were at that very time being further developed by Bentinck and R.M. Bird. Nor would his educational and political activities have been the cause. It seems likely that the cause is to be found in the financial sphere. Mackenzie was not only an advocate of free trade (witness his papers on transit duties) but of the free movement of money and private enterprise. He was Chairman of the Mint Committee and President of the government controlled Bank of Bengal. It was his Minutes in this connection which first ruffled the Directors and his parliamentary evidence on the same subjects, as well as upon European "settlement" which infuriated some at least of them. It was Holt Mackenzie the free trader and financier rather than Holt Mackenzie the revenue reformer or even the Utilitarian thinker which aroused them. His association, following his brilliant and unwelcome evidence in 1831-32, with the disliked Charles Grant and the detested Whig government as an India Board commissioner, and his reported influence over both Charles Grant and Macaulay, must have added fuel to the flames of dislike. To many directors concerned with commercial matters and resentful of radical attacks on their privileges, Mackenzie must have appeared to be a burcaucratic renegade, a deserter from the Company's ship of state. This would justify in their minds the refusal to recognise by promotion the other outstanding services of one of their admittedly most brilliant servants.

It now remains to attempt some appraisal of Holt Mackenzie's work and position as a whole. Was he more than "the ingenious Mr. Mackenzie", an intelligent and industrious back room boy, or should he be ranked with the great Anglo-Indians of the early nineteenth century? The three scholars already mentioned[35] have studied his achievements in various fields but have not attempted an overall view. Mackenzie's best known work was in the revenue department, dealt with by Dr. Misra, and indeed by all concerned with the revenue system of Bengal. It is this work which provided much material for Dr. Stokes' study of the influence of Utilitarian thought on the Indian administration. Here it is enough to say that his *Memorandum* of 1 July, 1819 which formed the basis of Regulation VII of 1822 and of 19 October 1826, on the measures necessary to give better effect to Regulation VII of 1822 are generally agreed to have provided the basis of the settlement of the North-Western provinces devised by Bentinck and Bird which was embodied in Regulation IX of 1833. Experience in the North-

Western provinces, specially through James Thomason, greatly influenced the Punjab settlement so that Mackenzie may be said to have been the inspirer of this whole chain of revenue settlements in northern India. He provided the chapter and verse for the kind of settlement which Charles Metcalfe advocated by instinct. This achievement at once places him, in revenue matters, on a level with Metcalfe and Munro.

His next achievement is as a financier and economist with which Dr. Tripathi has dealt. It is difficult for a non-economist to speak with confidence on the quality of this side of Mackenzie's work. It seems clear, however, that his was the leading economic influence in the Government of India during the eighteen twenties, that he was the persuasive advocate of free trade and the free movement of capital, and that he carried this advocacy to success in London in the years 1831-33. He anticipated Charles Trevelyan in advocating the abolition of inland transit duties by ten years and there seems little doubt that his writings must have influenced Trevelyan in this respect.

Mackenzie's influence on education was more felt than seen. It is true that he was instrumental in the setting up by Adam of the Committee of Public Instruction in 1823, but his "guiding light" minute on the Committee's work is not one of his major works.[36] He missed the final controversy in Bengal in 1835 because he was in England but it was there that he influenced Macaulay as to the importance of English education. We can therefore see Mackenzie's influence in Macaulay's Minute on Education as well as in Charles Trevelyan's paper on the abolition of Transit Duties.

His tour with Lord Amherst produced an important paper on policy towards the Indian States which was commended by the Directors and preserved for reference by Lord Dalhousie.[37] But he lacked the opportunity to develop these ideas.

These contributions suggest the picture of an administrator with a fertile and imaginative mind. But we have still to find evidence of a mind with comprehensive ideas of its own for which these administrative problems provided means of expression. Holt was fortunate in that at the end of his time in India he found someone with whom he could collaborate on just such a larger scale. It was his two years collaboration with Lord William Bentinck, and particularly his membership of the Civil Finance Committee, which gave him this opportunity. It was his *Report on Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit* which gave Bentinck his cue for the creation of Commissioners and the eventual union of the District Magistrate's and Collector's offices.[38] He used the Civil Finance Committee and the financial crisis which faced it to press for Indianisation in the name of economy. His two final *Minutes* to the Committee of 20 July, 1830, and 1 October, 1830[39] contained general surveys of the whole range of Indian government, and must, I think, constitute his principal claim to larger statesmanship. These papers may be read as a mere expression of Benthamite doctrine applied to India, but, read

with his other later writings, they suggest much more. The views expressed have a comprehensive character, as of a man who can see round a problem in all its aspects and implications. They evince a practicality, despite Holt's limited practical experience, which forbids his dismissal as a doctrinaire. He was always ready to jettison utilitarian theory when it interfered with practical needs, or Indian conditions. Above all his sense of the people's rights and needs grows into something like a passion. Doctrines of rent are subordinated to the actual conditions of revenue payment, a theoretically correct judicial system to the circumstances of the suitor and the sanctity of property to the actuality of Indian custom. That he had a statesman's vision of the whole as well as the administrator's eye for detail and organisation, and a passion for social justice as well as mere improvement may be seen from the following extract from his Indian swan song, the *Minute* of 1 October, 1830.[40]

> If it be objected to our plans, that they involve much change, I can say, admitting the expediency of making all alterations gradually, that here at least great changes appear to be indispensably necessary, nay unavoidable. Every where indeed, the causes of change are at work; and the real question is, not how things can be made stationary, but how mischievous, or mischievously sudden, changes are to be avoided. In arguing for change too, I would not rest upon the existence of slight evils, such as must every where prevail, not upon any vain hope of sudden improvement, such as is no where likely to be realized. But it appears to me that the existing evils are very great; that many of them may be traced immediately to the system of government; and that system contains within itself no elements of improvement, but is calculated to perpetuate and aggravate the mischiefs of a foreign and military domination. If not hated by the people, we are at least without the slightest hold on their affections: from Benares upwards the fact appears to be generally admitted, and within those limits lies almost all the military part of our population. This seems, it may be proper to remark, to have no connection with the permanency of the settlement, on which the very few who were interested never probably relied, and of which the great body of the landowners never heard; of some thousand petitions which I received when in the Western Provinces, (at Bareily alone I had 500 in a few days), and of many tens of thousands of petitioners whom I saw and talked with, not one touched upon the point. Nor is it, I conceive, to be accounted for by the mere circumstance of our being foreign conquerors. On this side of India at least the number of those who can ever have regarded us as conquerors is very small. The great body of the people had for centuries been accustomed to the dominion of foreigners, and the feeling evinces itself in a manner to show that, generally speaking, it is the system rather than the individuals who conducted it, that is the object of aver-

sion; still less, I fear, can we flatter ourselves that, as seems sometimes to be thought, our unpopularity is only of such extent and kind as might naturally be expected to follow the administration of impartial laws in a country where various classes had been accustomed to domineer over their fellows.

67. Without denying that some of the dislike under which we labour is inseparable from the position we hold, much must, I conceive, be charged to measures and arrangements by no means necessary of adoption. Nothing can be more striking than the scorn with which the people have been practically treated at the hands of even those who are actuated by the most benevolent motives; for, since the world began, there is probably no example of a government carrying the principle of absolutism so completely through the civil administration of a country, if that can be called civil which is in its spirit so purely military; nay, which sets the people aside in the management of their own concerns much more than the sepahee in the government of the army. The principle pervades every act, from the highest exercise of legislative power to the appointment of the meanest public officer. But of all the consequences of our errors I would attach most importance to their effects on the village associations, which form the great bond of society throughout so large a part of India, but which have been greatly misunderstood and disturbed. These institutions seem to afford one of the most important of all the instruments we could use to insure the good government of the country and the comfort of individuals. Without them, or some substitute similarly resting on popular principle, we must, I fear, have a miserable and disunited people, whom it is scarcely possible to govern otherwise than as the slaves of our native servants; whereas with them, these men might, I conceive, be made, really servants of the public; at the same time that our judges and magistrates would assume their proper station as governors, according to their several degrees, in all they ought to govern, and would leave it to the people to transact, with their protection, support and control, the innumerable concerns of civil life, which they alone can tolerably administer. One cannot too often recur to the principles which ought to restrain us from the error into which we constantly fall of doing too much, both legislatively and executively, under a government which excludes the idea of political freedom. The best chance for anything like civil liberty is to be found in narrowing the sphere of its interference, and extending that of popular tribunals; absolute power may thus be made consistent with much civil liberty, and this in large and divided nations, with no risk of political disturbance; but laws arbitrarily imposed by a despotic government can have comparatively little effect in checking the abuse of power, except as they restrict the occasions of its being exercised;

and it seems to be vain to think that we can by any legislative provision secure the community from extortion and vexation, if we once allow, or require the government officers to interfere perpetually on the minute details of the people's business. We have unfortunately acted on an opposite principle, interfering in almost every thing, neglecting popular institutions where they exist, and never attempting to create them where wanting. We have trusted to laws as a check upon subordinate officers which have operated almost exclusively as shackles upon the controlling authorities, or occasions of fraud to the few among the community who knew of them.

68. No time should be lost in correcting this error: we should especially use every endeavour to revive and maintain the system of village or parish government, (to prevent abuse by the head men, when placed on a proper footing, will not apparently be difficult), and we should gradually extend the principle by the use of other local associations of a wider sphere and higher function. We may thus, with a true economy, infinitely facilitate the administration of affairs, prove ourselves great benefactors to the country, and possibly, with moderation in our taxes, secure the attachment of the people, and so remove one great cause of our military expenditure.

69. In using the words "moderation in our taxes", I must explain, that where the contract system prevails, the mere lightness of the Government demand will go for little towards securing attachment, or producing happiness, unless we protect the great body of the community from our revenue officers and engagers, and from our police. In several districts are to be found combined the most extravagant sacrifices of the public revenue with most glaring violations of private rights. From our unhappy ignorance, and the influence of corruption, it frequently happens, that where the Government dues haye been most extensively relinquished there the body of the people are most oppressed and wretched. Nor, though exaction is under our own, as under all native governments, the grand evil to be cured, must we confine our views to that object: our whole system of law and the mode of its administration requires to be carefully revised, with a full advertence to the feelings and circumstances of the people, and every possible means should be taken of ascertaining what they desire, and feel and think, before laws are passed affecting their interests. From the want of such precautions, and from too much and too hasty legislation, several of our laws, which are in appearance calculated to secure the rights of the people, have, in their application, without due knowledge, to countries of vast extent, and to persons standing in a great variety of social relations, been perverted to the destruction of their dearest properties and privileges; the mischief of a bad law going

infinitely beyond the tyranny of individuals, the worst of whom are likely to be in some degree checked by shame, or remorse or fear.

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Percival Spear

Nawab Walidad Khan and the 1857 Struggle in the Bulandshahr District

The major historical problem presented by the events of 1857 concerns the process by which military mutiny was converted into civil rebellion. Some of the key features of the process stand out immediately—the capture of key urban centres by the mutineers, an autonomous peasant *jacquerie* in the countryside, and the linking of the two by political leadership supplied from the magnate class. Bulandshahr District provides an interesting case-study of at least the two latter features. Close to the epicentre of disturbance at Meerut and bordering on Delhi, it commanded the line of communication with the Central Doab and Rohilkhand and so took the full force of the first shock wave. In its pattern of landed tenures and revenue settlement it was fairly evenly divided between an eastern portion dominated by large landlord estates and a western half where jointly owned individual village estates were more common. And it was this pattern which rendered revolt potentially more formidable. In Meerut District to the north the elements of popular disturbance were stronger, embracing not merely Gujar, Rangar, and Rajput peasant communities but also the better organized Jat clan colonies of northern Baghpat, Baraut, Chhaprauli, Kutana, and Barnawa parganas. But Meerut District lacked large-scale landlordism with the notable exception of the Jat raja of Kuchchesar in the extreme south-east whose estates properly formed part of the Bulandshahr landlord complex. In consequence there was lacking the political leadership which could weld heterogeneous elements together and generalize revolt beyond its immediate local and caste origins.

In Bulandshahr the movement of popular revolt was less sustained but it found leadership in the landlord tracts of the eastern portion of the district, principally in the person of Nawab Mohammed Walidad Khan of Malagarh. For a time it looked as though he might build up an extensive power in the Upper Doab. William Muir, head of the improvised intelligence service at Agra, mirrored official fears. Although as a civilian committed to exculpating the civil authorities by tireless iteration that 'the character of the affair is that of a Military mutiny—a struggle between the Government and the Soldiers, and not between the Government and the People', he and Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor, were sufficiently alarmed at Walidad's activities by late July to press for a major change in strategy in order to deal with him:

> 'The mischief done by the country being from week to week organized against us, and the affair being thus not only of a mutinous Army, but of a generally hostile *population, is of a very serious character.*'[1]

Like so many leaders of the 1857 rising Walidad remains a shadowy figure. J. W. Sherer met him in Agra shortly before the outbreak, and afterwards supposed he must have been engaged in plotting it:

> During my stay at Agra Wulleedad Khan, who afterwards gave much trouble at his own town, Boolundshuhr, got an introduction to me, and called two or three times. He was then, as was known afterwards, plotting against our Government amongst the Mahomedans of Agra, and I suppose made up to me in the hopes of hearing from me what Harrington and men in his position thought in the crisis. I remember one day saying that the misapprehension in the Army was very extraordinary, and Wulleedad answered, 'But it is of no importance. What could revolted Sepoys do? A soldier untrue to his salt is not a formidable enemy.' When we finally parted, he said he hoped sooner or later the Government (Sircar) would send me to Boolundshuhr. It was very odd that he should have taken the trouble to talk in this false way. I can only suppose he wished to create a favourable impression of loyalty, as a string to his bow in case of accidents.'[2]

Walidad had every motive for striking out as revolutionary leader. On the death of his father, Bahadur Khan, in 1824, the British authorities had whittled down the family property by revoking the lease of 36 villages in paragana Agauta. A compensatory life pension of Rs. 1000 was made to Walidad, then a minor, leaving him with an estate of 20 entire villages and shares in 24 others, not a large patrimony for one with such considerable pretensions.[3] He never ceased to agitate for the reversion of the Agauta *taluq*, and Sir George Harvey selected him as the prime example of the man of ancient family with a grievance to nurse, the product of British revenue policy and the law's delays. His case, wrote Harvey with some exaggeration, had been heard by every Resident of Delhi since the time of Ochterlony and by almost every Governor General in Council. 'The last decision, intended to be definitive, was by Sir Charles (late Lord) Metcalfe; and yet being a family quarrel it had been periodically re-opened, and was hardly closed finally when I held the office of Agent in 1855; and still rankled in the minds of many of the family'.[4]

In 1852 Walidad married his niece to Prince Mirza Jawan Bakht and so became connected with the royal house.[5] At the time of the Meerut sepoys' irruption into Delhi on the historic morning of 11 May 1857, Walidad was probably in or near the city. At all events he was quickly summoned into Bahadur Shah's presence on 13 May, and by 16 May the newswriter was reporting that he was to be sent across the Jumna to establish government on the other side because of the anarchy and misrule caused by the Gujars.[6] On 17 May, before he had apparently set off, he addresed a petition to the King concerning the administration of 'Ilaqa Doab, District Bulanshahr' to which he had been appointed *Subah*. The terms are significant. Promising to remit the revenues to the King and dispatch recruits

for the royal army, he was granted in return the *jagir* held by his father, power to raise troops on his own account, and a promise of assistance from the royal army 'at the time of necessity'.[7]

The Delhi regime was clearly anxious to draw upon the surrounding countryside for money and men and was worried that Gujar disorders might frustrate these hopes. The Gujars were thickly settled in the Yamuna (Jumna) and Hindan *khadir*, especially in the Dari, Dankaur, and Sikandarabad parganas of the Bulandshahr district across the river from Delhi. Their immediate instinct on the news of the Meerut outbreak was plunder, but they were neither devoid of economic grievance nor innocent of political motive. In Dadri where they were considerable landholders their losses had been considerable, possibly amounting to something over a quarter of their holdings during the currency of the 1839-59 settlement. In Dankaur where at the end of the settlement they still held 48 of the 114 villages in the paragana, the 18 entire villages alienated during the period were said to be those 'chiefly belonging to Gujars'.[8] Their sharp demise from political consequence under the British must also have continued to rankle. At the outset of British rule three great Gujar chiefs, Ramdayal Singh, Nain Singh, and Arjit Singh held a large part of the upper Doab on fixed revenue farm (*mukarari*), but their descendants had suffered a catastrophic decline into obscurity and indigence.

The Gujars rose in the Sikandarabad area on 12 May 1857, pillaging and plundering along the roads, burning the rest houses and destroying the telegraph wire. During the evening Turnbull, the retiring Magistrate, and Alfred Lyall, then a newly joined civilian, galloped over from Bulandshahr, ten miles distant, to restore some semblance of order. Within the next few days by the aid of a contingent of the 9th Native Infantry they gathered in some 46 Gujar prisoners and took them back for incarceration in Bulandshahr gaol.[9] A week later the arrival of a mutinied regiment from the east threw Sikandarabad again into confusion. Walidad appears to have stopped at Dadri on his way from Delhi to Malagarh and decided to make use of the Gujar disturbances for his own purposes. At least there seems no reason to discredit the Crown witnesses who later alleged that Walidad entered into concert with the Gujar leaders at Dadri.[10] Certainly they were too fractured into small groups to acknowledge a single leader of their own. Hereditary right belonged to the grandsons of Ajit Singh who had been the *mukararidar* of the Dadri region. These were Bishun Singh and Bhagwan Singh of Dadri, who according to the British indictment 'raised the whole of the Pergunnah on the Jumna'.[11] Other Gujar leaders were thrown up spontaneously by the crisis. Such were Umrao Singh, zamindar of Kutaira (pargana Dadri), and Mullick Singh of Koonab (p. Dadri), who set themselves up as self-styled rajas, or Surjit Goojur an 'Officer' of the rebels and 'ringleader of the plunder of Dunpour' (Dunkour? i.e. Dankaur). Srivabansi Rai Vakil later deposed that Walidad 'and the Goojurs of Dadree, and Bishun Singh and Bhagwant Singh, and

Umrao Singh, etc., meeting together, plotted the destruction of the Government'.[12]

It is not clear whether Walidad incited the huge Gujar attack of 21 May on the civil station of Bulandshahr. It appears to have been led by Umrao Singh with the double object of plundering the treasury and releasing the Gujar prisoners from the gaol, and coincided with the arrival of the headquarters of the mutinied 9th N. I. at Khurja (12 miles south) from Aligarh. Deserted by their own contingent of the 9th N. I. as well as their Irregular Cavalry and collectorate *sowars,* the British officials were forced to quit.[13] For four days the town and civil station were given over to Gujar plundering until the Sirmoor battalion of Gurkhas arrived to clear it and allow the officials, led by Brand Sapte, the Magistrate, to resume control on 26 May. On that day Walidad reached his fort at Malagarh, which lay some 4 miles north of Bulandshahr and commanded the road to Hapur and Meerut. He still delayed declaring himself openly, acknowledging to Sapte that he has been deputed by the King as Subah of the Bulandshahr and Aligarh districts, but excusing himself on the grounds that only in this way could he have obtained a pretext to leave Delhi.[14] Although the district was rapidly falling into disorder, none of the principal landholders had stirred against the British. Indeed they had responded at the outset to Sapte's requisition for men at arms to help maintain order, especially Rao Gulab Singh, the Jat raja of Kuchchesar, Mahmud Ali Khan of Chatari, Murad Ali Khan of Pahasu, Lachman Singh of Shikarpur, and even Abdul Latif Khan of Khanpur. Crown witnesses later alleged that Walidad instigated the Gujar sack of Sikandarabad that took place on 29 May, the day after the Gurkha force left the district to join Wilson's army at Ghaziabad.[15] By all accounts it was a fearful affair, and thousands of refugees came flocking into Bulandshahr. Sapte argued that he was unable to defend Sikandarabad because his forces were tied down by Walidad's armed presence so close to Bulandshahr. He appears to have ordered Walidad to send his troopers against the Gujars and obtained a show of compliance, but by 8 June Sapte had information that Walidad was assembling the Gujars at Baral (3 miles from Malagarh) in preparation for an attack on Bulandshahr. He dealt a stern warning that he would answer with his life and property if trouble ensued, at the same time making a sortie towards Malagarh. Walidad made a truculent reply but still did not disavow allegiance.[16]

In the end he stumbled rather than entered boldly into rebellion. On 10 June, confronted by the desertion of almost the whole of his guard of 75 irregular cavalrymen on the news of the arrival at Khurja of a large body of mutineers of the Oudh Irregular Cavalry, Sapte withdrew his small band 12 miles north to Gulaothi, returning to Bulandshahr next day when he learned that the mutineers at Khurja had moved towards Delhi. In the interval Walidad's forces under Mohd. Ismail Khan had, however, taken possession of the civil station in the name of the British Government. Sapte's account of the clash that followed suggests that his small contingent was led deliberately into a trap, but undoubtedly the British forced

the issue by taking the offensive when there was delay in giving them peaceful admission into the town.[17] They were decisively worsted and retired northwards, leaving Walidad in control.

The die was now cast, but Walidad's report of his success that day (11 June) showed little elation. He had brought with him a small band of Ghazis and mutineers and had unearthed half a dozen guns, but was in desperate need of trained troops and artillery.[18] The Gujars had given him useful aid but they were little better than an armed rabble and could not stand against regular forces. Even so, they were an important ancillary for a time, especially those of the Nadwasia clan drawn from his own pargana Agauta. Dwelling in the 12 villages known as 'nadwasa Barah', their leader Aiman Singh immediately cast in his lot with Walidad who acknowledged to the King the 'immense assistance' he had received 'from Ayman Googer and his tribe generally' in the actions which followed against the British between 11 and 22 June.[19] After that date Walidad was powerfully re-inforced by the adherence of the mutinied Bareilly Brigade, but as late as 29 July when he was attacked at Gulaothi his army of 400 cavalry and 600 infantry was backed by 'about 1,000 insurgent Gujars and Rajputs'.[20]

Ayman Singh followed Walidad into Rohilkhand when the latter had to flee after the British recapture of Delhi in late September 1857, but generally the Gujars proved equivocal allies. Indeed, in the disturbed Hapur tahsil we are told 'on one occasion it was only with the assistance of the generally disloyal Gujars that the tahsildar was able to bring in his collections in safety from Datiyana'.[21] The Sikandarabad Gujars were a much earlier and more serious embarrassment. Delhi naturally expected Walidad to consolidate his hold on this region which marched with that under its direct sway centred on Ghaziabad and comprised most of the Loni, Jalalabad and Dasna parganas of the Meerut district.[22] Although at one stage he sent a detachment to Sikandarabad under Mohd. Amin Khan and Mirza Ahmad Beg, Walidad confessed his powerlessness to prevent the continued looting of the town in view of the British threat to the north of Malagarh. 'No traveller can pass safely between Ghaziabad and Sikandarabad', he freely acknowledged, 'Gujars and other country folk of this neighbourhood have raised their heads . . . they have plundered and killed all the people of Sikandarabad, burnt their houses and carried away all their belongings on carts'.[23] Walidad used these conditions as evidence of his need for troops and artillery from Delhi, but they also threw a question mark over his capacity to assume the role of successor authority to the British. Inayet Ullah of the Baluch family of Chanderu was soon writing to the King offering to restore order in Sikandarabad and collect revenue from the pargana in the hope that he would be restored to his grandfather's title of Nassiruddaula and be made tahsildar and kotwal. And in August the King would appear to have agreed to the request.[24]

Even in the Agauta pargana, where the Gujars under Aiman Singh served loyally and where they were joined by the *batisa* (32 villages) of Muslim Chauhans

that had formed the *taluq* of his father, Walidad ran into serious difficulties. The tide of popular revolt provoked its own counter-revolution. What prompted Jat resistance is obscure. Although they appear to have been gaining land in the Hapur tahsil, there is no evidence that the Jats had at this period made any significant acquisitions in Agauta pargana. By 1865, however, when the Chauhans 'had lost most of their villages by private sale or mortgage, [and] the Gujars by confiscation for rebellion', the Jats are recorded as possessing 26 villages out of some 90 in the pargana.[25] There may well have been some traditional caste rivalry running back into the pre-Mutiny decades. Alternatively, there may have been influences from above. Just as the Chauhans heeded the call of their hereditary *taluqudar*, Walidad Khan, so the Jats of Bhutona, Sehra and Saidpur may well have responded to the lead of the neighbouring Jat raja, Rao Gulab Singh, with his huge taluq of some 270 villages. Or perhaps the efforts to collect revenue of Walidad's agents, like Ghulam Haider Khan, touched off their anger. Whatever the cause Jat resistance reaching out from Bhutona had a critical effect.[26] Of a much more stubborn and cohesive character than Gujar insurgency, it proved indomitable not only against the Bareilly brigade which reinforced Walidad on June 23 but also against the powerful Jhansi Brigade sent from Delhi in response to Walidad's urgent request toward the end of August. Khushi Ram, one of the Jat headmen of Bhutona, later made an important contribution to the final suppression of the revolt after the British had recovered the district at the end of September. Appointed *kotwal* of Anupshahr and permitted to raise a force of 200 matchlockmen, he did yeoman service for his foreign masters, holding the line of the Ganga against all rebel attempts to force the passage of the river from Rohilkhand.[27] It was small wonder that the British filled the ranks of the new district police with Jats rather than rely again on Gujars such as the brothers, Hatan Singh and Bahadur Singh, who had been jemedar chowkidars of Khurja and Bulandshahr and had deserted their posts to join the rebellion.[28]

The most serious obstacle Walidad encountered was not, however, the opposition of the Jat peasantry. The attitude of the large landholders proved a much more decisive stumbling-block. On 21 June when he had been driven back at Gulaothi and felt in desperate straits (the Bareilly mutineers did not join him until two days later) he wrote bitterly to the King:

> 'The fact is that all the nobles (Raees) of this district have conspired with the Britishers and they are bent upon showing allegiance to the infidels (Kaffar). Although a battle is impending between me and the infidels, none of the nobles has come forward to my assistance, nor did they send any man.'[29]

Walidad was overstating the case, or rather expressing the truth that a rebel can never allow his cause to stand still and that he that was not with him was against him. For the most part Walidad could complain of no more than a malevolent neutrality; the British found few active collaborators among the

magnates. Even Rao Gulab Singh of Kuchchesar did little more than keep quiet in his domains until the British reoccupied the district.[30]

The pattern of magnate response was complex. While preparing to admit exceptions and qualifications the British hankered after a simplest explanation of the revolt and found it in the theory of a general Muslim conspiracy.[31] The exceptions and qualifications were the adhesion of turbulent classes like the Gujars, and the isolated instance of Muslim 'loyalty' like that displayed by the Chatari and Pahasu branches of the Lalkhani Badgujars. Charles Currie at least made some short of analysis on these lines :

> 'As a general rule with the exception of the Rajpoot Mahomedan Raees of Chuttaree, Danpoor, Pahasoo, and Dhurrumpoor, the Mussulmen throughout the district joined the rebels, heart and soul. Some few of the richer and wiser played a double game. The Jats for the most part sided with the British Government and kept quiet. The Rajpoots in most parts of the District and the Goojurs throughout the whole District took advantage of the times to plunder, and commit all kinds of atrocities. The Pergunnahs of Syanah, Ahar, Anoopshahr, Didhaee and Jawur suffered least. With the exception of the disturbances created by the Goojurs, Gourwa and Galoti Rajpoots, Meas and Rajpoots inhabiting the Grand Trunk Road in Pergunnahs Burn and Agoutah, the principal disturbances were caused by men of influence either quarelling among themselves, or rising against the Government.'[32]

The magnates, having most to lose, were last to move. Popular disturbance followed by defection of the local police establishments had first unseated British control in the countryside. Compelled to reply on their small, doubtful contingents of native infantry and on irregular levies raised by the magnates, the British found that while ready to repress popular disturbance these would not face the mutinied regiments coming in from the east after 19 May. Their last instrument of coercion having crumbled in their hand, the British quitted. Only then did the question of large-scale magnate defection arise, a pattern observable in other regions if we accept Professor Majumdar's interpretation.[33]

For the magnates the key problem was that of a successor authority to the British, more substantial ones being concerned to prevent a revolution that would upset the existing balance of social and economic power among them. Such a revolution naturally made its strongest appeal to the declining and the deprived, both among gentry and peasantry. But the fact that these elements were Muslim, whether the Sayid and Sheikh squireens of Shikapur, or the Gahlot and Chauhan Rajput peasant communities, is to a large degree incidental. Although historic links with Mughal Delhi and the call of the faith were doubtless potent ideological factors, it would be safer, generally speaking, to regard Islam as a communal and political division rather than a religious one, and to see the broad separation of 1857 occurring in economic terms between the haves and have-nots. The split

among the Bulandhshahr magnate class can certainly be read in such a way. The Muslim Badgujar Lalkhani family divided exactly in this fashion, the haves being represented by the Chatari and Pahasu rais, and the have-nots by Mazhur Ali and Rahim Ali of Khylea. Similarly the sated Kuchchesar raja kept on the British side while the Hindu Rani Chauhan of Anupshahr ousted the Kayath Lala Babu family from its ill-gotten gains in her ancestral villages, proclaimed her grandson, Kour Hinanchal Singh, as the future Raja of Anupshahr, and sought recognition from Bahadur Shah.[34] But if material interest dictated the broad line of separation, communal considerations could in certain critical instances influence political allegiance. The restoration of Mughal authority in Delhi appeared to foreshadow the restoration of the ancien regime in the countryside. In determining an acceptable successor authority to the British traditional claims to political ascendancy were clearly important. Where vestiges of the ancient regime were still considerable, they supplied the natural framework of authority and all those concerned to repress anarchy and plundering might grant it at least temporary recognition. Bahadur Shah in Delhi, Khan Bahadur Khan in Bareilly, and Tuffuzal Hussain Khan in Farruckabad were raised up in this way by force of circumstance.

In Bulandshahr District no such natural successor authority existed, the country having been parcelled out under several heads for many decades before the British conquest. In terms of actual power and consequence, next to the Kuchchesar raja stood Abdul Latif Khan, *taluqdar* of the Khanpur estate of some 107 entire villages and 41 portions, besides others in surrounding districts. As head of the Pathans of the famous *Barah Basti* of pargana Ahar and Sayana from which so many of the sowars of the Irregular Cavalry were recruited, he was under considerable pressure to join the revolt. From his father he had inherited a considerable estate and a bitter hereditary feud with the Kuchchesar Jat family. Under the British the struggle for preeminence had to be fought out as a struggle for property. Even in the homeland of Gulab Singh, pargana Sayana, Abdul Latif battled with him for control. 'Both vied with each other in getting a footing in every village either as vendors or mortgagees'. In the huzur pargana of Baran the alienation of holdings during the currency of the 1839-59 settlement was the highest in the district, amounting to 46 entire villages and 37 portions of others out of a total of 141 villages. 12 villages were mortgaged owing to the extravagence of their Pathan proprietors and 'the remaining transfers are due to the acquisitive spirit of the great landholders who vied with each other in laying baits for getting a footing in the villages'.[35] Clearly the Kuchchesar family came off best gaining 19 villages in the pargana by the purchase of taluqa Bhatwara from the impoverished Pathan family of Manda Kherah.[36]

Abdul Latif supplied the Magistrate with sowars at the outbreak of revolt and was slow to shift his allegiance. The seizure of power by a minor landowner like Walidad Khan on the British withdrawal, even though with the apparent authority of Bahadur Shah, could hardly move him to rapid recognition. As

the leading Muslim landowner he played for time, keeping open his communications with the British while seeking a *shuka* of appointment directly from the King in Delhi. By 16 July he was so far successful in obtaining one that Walidad was complaining to the King that "Abdul Lateef Khan, the Raees of Khanpur, who is an old enemy of mine, is co-operating with the Britishers in causing hindrances in the administration of this place'. He asked especially that 'no royal order be issued in such matters without the knowledge of Your humble servant on mere submission to Raees of the Doab'; otherwise 'chaos and confusion shall prevail in the administration of the territory assigned to me'.[37] Abdul Latif prevaricated fatally. He kept up a correspondence with Sapte the Magistrate who issued peremptory demands for him to send in his revenue and at the same time he apparently entertained mutineers and raised contingents from them. On the recapture of Bulandshahr when Walidad fled across the Ganga into Rohilkhand, Abdul Latif started like a guilty thing but then returned to his fort and sent in his revenue. British punishment for his pusillanimity was swift and unrelenting; he was tried, sentenced to transportation for life, and stripped of all his estates.[38]

The other Muslim family of consequence was the Lalkhani Badgujars, but as we have seen, the four sons of Murdan Ali Khan, who had inherited the estates of Chatari, Pahasu, Dhurpur and Danpur, all adhered to the British cause or stayed quiet. Mahmud Ali Khan of Chatari and Murad Ali Khan of Pahasu helped to rescue 8 guns from falling into rebel hands in the Aligarh District, a few miles to the south, and Murad Ali, before his death from fever, attacked Indurjit Thakur and successfully dispersed his forces.[39]

In default of large-scale magnate support Walidad was forced to rely on lesser men. Chief among these were Muzhur Ali Khan and his son, Rahim Ali Khan of Khylea, descendants of the great Badgujar chief, Dandi Khan and the losers of the Lalkhani estate through the latter's rebellion. These rallied the Saiyids of Shikapur, for whom things had gone ill under the British, their 'extravagance' having cost them a number of their villages. In Shikarpur the green flag was raised and a holy war preached, the British noting how deep was the commitment to rebellion by the fact that so many of the inhabitants fled at their approach.[40] The leaders Rahim Ali and Muzhur Ali, joined Walidad across the Ganga, but their degree of prior concert with him is not clear. Lachman Singh makes no mention of it despite his close personal knowledge, Shikarpur being his home and as the mortgage he had no doubt helped drive such *mafidars* as Kurrum Hoosain, Talib Hoosain, Musuud Ally, Shorut Ally into active rebellion.[41] He merely says: 'They [Rahim Ali and Muzhur Ali] took possession of the villages owned by Chowdri Lachman Singh, and styled themselved *Amils* of the king's government for Parganah Shikarpur', and later placed themselves under Khan Bahadur Khan in Rohilkhand.[42] Walidad found other such pockets of support or collaboration. One of these was the Nagars of Ahar, a community of Muslim Brahmans who occupied 4 villages and who helped the Bareilly mutineers

to cross the Ganga at Garmukhtesar towards the end of May. From among them Sohrab Khan 'set himself up as Thannadar and had it proclaimed by beat of drum that whoever mentioned the English should be shot'.[43] He appears to have obtained confirmation of his appointment from Walidad and followed him later into Rohilkhand. Religion may have been the impelling force behind the action of the 400 or so Nagars of Ahar and 4 dependent villages, but the fact that some were sowars in the Oudh Irregular Cavalry and Gwalior Contingent was perhaps more decisive. One might say the same of the more important group of Pathan villages known as the Barah Basti. Walidad drew some of his chief officers from this area along the Ganga, among them Ismail Khan, his general, and the latter's uncle, Mohamed Hyat Khan, *risaldar* of the 14th Irregular Cavalry, both of whom were from Gheesapore. Lachman Singh states that Ismail Khan a 'near relation' of Walidad, had been formerly a trooper in Skinner's Horse, and successively kotwal of Jalandar and Meerut.[44] Ghulam Haider Khan, Walidad's chief revenue officer, 'a well-to-do man' and proprietor of 4 villages in pargana Baran, may also have been a relative; one British report stated he was Walidad's 'brother'.[45] Another relative was Mustafa Khan of Jahangirabad who was convicted of traitorous correspondence with the King of Delhi but later pardoned. In Bulandshahr itself Walidad could count on the support of the Sheikh and Bahlim revenue-free grantees. Khurja, a key-road junction, with a strong Pathan element in the town, was also reckoned by the British 'a hot-bed of disaffection'. Murdan Ali allegedly 'raised the green flag' and 'directed the Mussulmen to rebellion', while Azim Khan took office as tahsildar of Khurja on Walidad's behalf, only later to be caught by Khushi Ram and hanged.[46] At Gulaothi Gholam Ali acted as Walidad's thanadar, and even at Sikandarabad Kadir Ali Khan, vakil of the Munsifs of Bulandshahr, nominally held office as Walidad's tahsildar.

Walidad began to look more dangerous when at the end of July he seemed to be extending his authority as far south as Aligarh. Colvin, the Lieutenant Governor, and Muir, the head of Intelligence at Agra, grew seriously alarmed at the prospect of Walidad organizing an alternative administration and remitting revenue to Delhi.[47]

These fears were in fact groundless. On the British evacuation of the Aligarh district on 2 July 1857 a panchayat took over the administration of the city of Koil to save it from plunder of the Mewatis and lower Muslim orders, but a vakil of the Judge's court, Nasimullah, disappointed in not being given a seat, persuaded Muhammed Ghaus Khan of Sikandra Rao to seize power. The revolutionaries then sought to validate their action by turning to Walidad for formal recognition. But this was empty posturing and in no way a real extension of Walidad's authority and influence. We are told that Ghaus Khan 'never extended his power beyond the city and never collected any revenue'. Walidad's power and formidableness had been magnified out of all proportion. For it should be clear from the analysis we have made that Walidad was unable to establish him-

self as the successor government. Authority fragmented rather than was seized entire. Admittedly Walidad managed to secure a vague recognition of his claims from outlying collaborating groups or individuals and clearly by August he was the accepted head of the rebellion, maintaining his position persistently while other potential rebels like Abdul Latif Khan had come to nothing. But he had been unable to generalize the revolt and mobilize the resources of the district. At the outset he appears to have sent in some of the treasure to Delhi acquired on taking over Bulandshahr, but thereafter it is highly improbable that he was ever in a position to send anything further. All his communications with Delhi were pleas for military assistance to enable him to crush the resistance of the Jats and the British, with the expressed intention that when his position was properly secure he would be able to collect and remit the land revenue and then make a push on Meerut.[48] Walidad never overcame the inherent limitations of his position. As a minor landowner he represented the decaying gentry rather than the flourishing magnate class. Only with instant, over-whelming force, could he have enforced his authority over the latter and availed himself of their resources. As it was, they remained effectively neutralized, and ultimately this was bound to tell against him. His hold remained little more than a leader of sepoys with his effective power narrowly circumscribed to the Malagarh area. When the avenging British column under Greathed moved into the District after the capture of Delhi, they encountered an enemy who had failed to push down roots into the countryside and so was unable to deploy its combined resources against them. A quick, sharp blow at Bulandshahr on 28 September 1857 and he was unseated.[49] He withdrew across the Ganga and reached Bareilly on 5 October, according to intelligence reports. There Khan Bahadur Khan was said to have placed under his command 4 paltans, more than a 1000 cavalry, and 2 guns for the purpose of reconquering Malagarh.[50] Sapte reported him ravaging the country on the other side of the Ganga opposite Ramghat in mid-November 1857. but Walidad made no serious effort to cross.[51] Indeed he was reported a little later to have made his way to Farruckabad, possibly to recruit more troops, but had to withdraw to Bareilly on the British reoccupation of Fatehgarh. For a short time he returned again to Ramghat in March 1858 where a force under Rahim Ali was collecting revenue.[52] In May there was a report that he had gone off to join Nana, and in December 1858 his name appeared among those said to be accompanying Firoz Shah in his break-out from Rohilkhand and subsequent dash across the Doab.[53] The British never managed to run Walidad to ground, and like so many of the leaders of rebellion he vanished silently from history.

Foiled in their desire to see Walidad 'hung on his own bastion' the British blew up his fort at Malagarh on 1 October 1857.[54] The weathered debris still survives on that low bare eminence overlooking the Kali Nadi. The site is strewn with pottery scraps, and here and there great masses of broken masonry. Walidad and his descendants have long since departed; so too his conquerors. The Hindu

ascetic's dream of quiet oblivion that Lyall recorded in his verse at last belongs to Malagarh.

When shall these phantoms flicker away?
Like the smoke of the guns on the wind-swept hill,
Like the sounds and colours of yesterday,
And the soul have rest, and the air be still.[55]

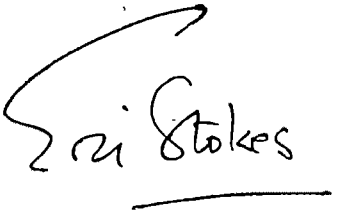
References

1. Muir to Brig-Gen Wilson. 25 August 1857; W. Muir, *Records of the Intelligence Department and during the Mutiny*, I, p. 144. The italicized words were underscored by Colvin. Cf. Colvin to Gov. Gen. 24 August 1857; *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, Vol. V, (ed S. A. A. Rizvi), Information Dept. U.P., Lucknow, 1960, pp. 858-9. Hereafter referred to as *F.S.U.P.*
2. J. W. Sherer, *Havelock's March to Cawnpore*, n.d. pp. 18-19.
3. *Statistical Descriptive and Historical Account of the North Western Provinces of India*, ed. Edwin T. Atkinson, Vol. III, Meerut Division Part II, Allahabad, 1876, pp. 64, 168. Referred to hereafter as *Gaz.*
   Walidad's estate in 1857 was composed as follows:
   Pargana Baran Dowlatgarh and 12 mouzas Share in Dhakouli and 10 mouzas.
   Pargana Agauta Neemchana and 5 mouzas Share in Malagarh and 9 mouzas.
   Pargana Sikandrabad Asadi and 3 mouzas.
   C. Currie to F. William, 21 Septembed 1858; Post Mutiny Records, Commissioner Meerut, Special (Revenue) File. U. P. State Archives, Allahabad.
4. G. F. Harvey, Cmmr. Agra Div. Narrative of Events, pp. 41-2; cited *F.S.U.P.*, Vol. I (ed. S. A. A. Rizvi and M. L. Bhargava) 1957, pp. 264-5.
5. *F.S.U.P.*, vol. I, p. 87. The Gazetteer states it was Walidad's sister's daughter: *Gaz*, op. cit, p. 168.
6. *F.S.U.P.*, vol. I, pp. 981, 986. Walidad stated, however, on June 1857 that he had been at Delhi for the last two months; ibid, vol. V, p. 54.
7. *F.S.U.P.*, vol. V, pp. 51-3.
8. *Gaz*, pp. 132-4, 138, 140.
9. Narrative of Events by Brand Sapte, cited Kuar Lachman Singh, *Historical and Statistical Memoir of Zila Bulandshahar*, Allahabad 1874, p. 25.
   A. C. Lyall to his father, 12-15 May 1857; Lyall Papers, MSS Eur. F. 132/3. India Office Library.
10. Depositions of Quazi Kamaluddin. Munshi Lachman Sarup, and Shrivabansi Rai Vakil; cited *F.S.U.P.*, V, pp. 40-51.
11. List of persons eminent for disloyalty in Bulandshahr District; Commr. Meerut, Dept. XII Special File 79/1858.
12. idem, p. 48.
13. A. C. Lyall to his father, 1 Jun. 1857: Lyall Papers Eur. Mss F. 132/3.
14. Umrao Singh's leadership of the attack on Bulandshahr of 21 May is attested by Munshi Lachman Sarup; *F.S.U.P.*, V, 44. Other details from Sapte's Narrative, cited K. L. Singh, p. 30.
15. *F.S.U.P.*, V, pp. 42, 45.
16. Walidad Khan to Magistrate, Bulandshahr, 8 June 1857. *F.S.U.P.* V, pp. 53-55.

17. Sapte, cited K. L. Singh. pp. 31-32. Lyall also at the time believed that a trap had been set (Lyall to father, 14 June [1857]), but later wrote on Ismail Khan's behalf stating he had now rejected this view (holograph copy of official latter, undated, unaddressed, MSS Eur. F. 132/3).
18. Walidad Khan to Bahadur Shah, 18 Shawwal 1273 (11 June 1857) *F.S.U.P.* V. pp. 55-6. Walidad speaks of applications for troops and artillery that had gone unanswered hitherto, which suggests that he had been committed to rebellion for some time.
19. Commr. Meerut, Dept. XII Special File 79/1858. Cf. Singh, p. 178, *Gaz.* pp. 104-5.
20. *Gaz.* 335.
21. Idem.
22. Gujar villagers in the Ghaziabad area appear to have paid revenue to the King; Muir, p. I, 129.
23. Letter of Walidad Khan to the King (n.d. From internal evidence c. 18 June 1859); *F.S.U.P.*, V, p. 66.
24. Petitions of Inayet Ullah Khan to the King, 10 July, 23 July and 4 August 1857. Lord Lake had conferred the title on Inayet's grandfather. He seems to have escaped punishment.
    Note 24 continued.
    At the outbreak of disturbances Sapte offered him permanent employ on condition of furnishing a troop of mounted men. In 1874 K. Lachman Singh recorded the family as owning some 15 villages in the Chanderu area.: K. L. Singh, pp. 195-6.
25. Charles Currie, *Bulandshahr Settlement Report*, 1865. Also *Gaz.*, p. 105.
26. Cf. Lyall to his sister Sybilla, 14 March 1858; MSS Eur. F. 132/3:
    > "The Jâts are of Sikh origin, held by us, the Goojurs by the Mahometans. This, however, was nominal in reality every man was fighting for his own hand. However it was grand fun. I shall never forget when we routed Wulleedad Khan on the auspicious 18th of June, and let loose the Jâts on the Goojurs. Seven villages were taken and sacked that day by the victorious Jâts and the black smoke of the burning hamlets spread terror through the country."

    Also Lyall to his father, 30 August 1857; idem.
27. On Bhutona Jats and services of Khushi Ram, C. Currie to F. Williams, 26 June 1858, Commr. Meerut Dept. XII Special (Revenue) File 59/1858.
28. List of persons eminent for disloyalty in Bulandshahr Dist., Commr. Meerut, Dept. XII Special File 79/1858.
29. Walidad Khan to Bahadur Shah, 28 Shawwal 1273 (21 June 1857), *transl.* Walidad Khan's Letters, No 19: U. P. State Archives, Allahabad.
30. B. Sapte to F. Williams, 17 March 1858: Commr. Meerut Dept. XII Special (Revenue), File 58/1858.
31. Cf. Lyall to father 30 August 1857 ". . . the whole insurrection is a great Mahomedan conspiracy, and . . . the sepoys are merely tools in the hands of the Mussulmans'.
    Cf. R. C. Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, pp. 398 ff.
32. C. Currie to W. Lowe. 20 Nov. 1858; N.W.P. Rev. Proc, No. 293 of 23 April 1859 (Range 221/22).
33. R. C. Majumdar *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857* Calcutta, 2nd ed. 1963.
34. K. L. Singh, p. 43, 128, *Gaz.* 63. *F.S.U.P.*, V, pp. 73-4.
35. *Gaz*, pp. 121, 176.
36. K. L. Singh, p. 193.
37. Walidad Khan to the King, 25 Zigad 1273 (16 July 1857) *transl*: Walidad Khan's letters No. 15, U. P. Archives, Allahabad.

38. Bulandshahr Mutiny Bastas, Files Nos. 368, 369, 734; U. P. State Archives, Allahabad.
39. B. Sapte to F. Williams, 17 March 1858. Commr. Meerut Dept. XII Special (Revenue) File No. 58/1858. Also N.W.P. Rev. Proc. No. 106 of 12 Sept. 1859. (Range 221/Vol. 30 I. O. Library). *Gaz.* pp. 67 ff.
40. C. Currie to F. Williams, 29 Jan. 1859; N.W.P. Rev. Proc. No. 170 of 17 August 1859 (Range 221, vol. 29).
41. F. Williams to Sadr. Board of Rev., 13 April 1859; N.W.P. Proc. No. 168 of 17 August 1859; Range 221/29.
42. K. L. Singh, p. 42.
43. C. Currie to F. Williams 18 June 1858; Commr. Meerut Dept. XII Special (Revenue), File 64/1858.
44. Some British reports stated that Ismail Khan was Walidad's nephew; *F.S.U.P.*, V, p. 807.
45. List of persons eminent for disloyalty, op. cit.; Commr. Meerut Dept. XII Special File 79/1858.
46. List of persons eminent for disloyalty: Bulandshahr District. Commr. Meerut, Dept. XII, Special File 79/158.
    Also C. Currie to F. Williams, 26 June 1858; ibid, File 59/185.
47. J. R. Colvin to W. Muir and Colvin to H. H. Greathed, 1 August 1857; F.S.U.P., V, p. 67, 68. Also Colvin to Brig.-Gen. Havelock, 22 July 1957; idem. p. 114.
48. Cf. Walidad to King, 28 Shawwal 1273 (21 June 1857) "After dealing a death blow to them in this district I shall proceed to Meerut and turn them out from there as well and along that route I shall present myself before Your Majesty". Letter 19. Cf. also Letter 12 (n.d.) Walidad Khan's letters. U. P. State Archives, Allahabad.
49. Walidad's force broke after losing only 150 men. Nuir I, 163.
50. Muir I, p. 217.
51. Muir to Sherer, 15 November 1857; cited *F.S.U.P.*, V, p. 119.
52. Idem, pp. 381, 387, 907.
53. Bulletin, Agra. 20 May 1858; *F.S.U.P.*, V, p. 125.
    Telegram Goodall to Reade, 7 December 1858; idem., p. 806. But this may have been a case of mistaken identity for Aleedad Khan 'the last of the 3 noted Etawah Mewatee dacoits, a very fine man'; idem, p. 820.
54. Sapte's Narrative, cited K. L. Singh, p. 34. Roberts, *Forty One Years in India* (1897), vol. I, p. 263.
55. Alfred Lyall, *Verses written in India* 4th edn. 1896.



Private British Investment in Eighteenth-Century Bengal

In one of the most striking passages of his speech on Fox's India Bill, Burke likened the British in India to 'birds of prey and passage', intent on acquiring fortunes and realising them in England as rapidly as possible, leaving nothing but destruction in their wake.

> England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high-roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain, to tell that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion, by anything better than the ourang-outang or the tiger.[1]

Most Englishmen who had served in India, whatever they may have thought about being called 'birds of prey', could hardly have objected to Burke's description of them as 'birds of passage'. While many Europeans were forced to spend the whole of their lives in the East, none intended to; and those who did return, unlike West Indian planters, did not usually choose to leave their fortunes invested in India to provide them with an income at home. There was much to deter European investment in India, even after the battles of Plassey and Buxar had given the British control of Bengal. Both life, in a climate regarded as lethal, and property seemed insecure. Until the end of the war in India in 1784 it still seemed likely that a major British settlement might again be captured by the East India Company's European or Indian enemies. Apart from the hazards of life in India, the individual British subject possessed no rights against the East India Company. He could not hold land or even live in India without the consent of the Company, and he could not send goods from India to England except in the Company's ships. Finally, with most men intent on carrying away their fortunes, capital was difficult to raise and Indian rates of interest were very high.

Yet in spite of all these obstacles, fortunes made in India were put to other purposes apart from obtaining remittances to Europe. In certain respects investment by Europeans began to leave its mark on Bengal within a few years of the assumption of British control. 1785 is a convenient point at which to assess the extent of such investment: it is twenty years after the grant of the *diwani*, and it marks the end of a period of instability. After 1784 the British were no longer fighting for survival, and a new order in the administration of Bengal began to

emerge with the appointment of Lord Cornwallis as Governor General in 1786. To visitors from Europe the most spectacular changes brought about by the first twenty years of British control of Bengal were to be found in Calcutta itself, which had been transformed from the settlement overrun by Siraj-ud-daula to a 'great and opulent city',[3] in which Europeans had built 'palaces' for themselves even if they had not built churches, hospitals or schools on a sufficient scale to be known to Burke. Several attempts had been made to 'cut navigations' and in other ways to make Calcutta more accessible to shipping. Outside Calcutta private European investment was playing a prominent part in the development of commodities such as raw silk, indigo and sugar, which were later to replace cotton piecegoods as the staple of Bengal's trade with Europe. As early as 1780, John Prinsep, of whom much will be said later, wrote that Bengal indigo, sugar, and tobacco would make 'a richer tribute . . . than is furnished by the present almost worn out system of investing it in manufactures which are every day falling in estimation at home, since European industry has adopted such variety of imitation and improvement upon the fabricks of the East'.[3] In 1785 there were said to be fourteen privately-owned silk filatures, fourteen indigo factories, and three sugar plantations in Bengal;[4] and Europeans were even trying to exploit deposits of coal, iron ore, copper, and lead.

On the surface, the East India Company's monopoly presented formidable obstacles to private European enterprise. Under the Company's charter no European could go to India without its consent.[5] From 1764 the Company's government in Bengal issued a series of orders confining all Europeans not in its service to Calcutta unless they obtained a licence to live elsewhere, and in 1781 these orders were enforced by act of parliament.[6] European freehold property was not recognised outside Calcutta and all leases of land required the Company's permission. In the 1790s these restrictions began to arouse mounting resentment in the European community and were subjected to bitter attacks leading to their gradual modification. But the evidence suggests that in the period before 1785 the Company did not enforce their restrictions on private Europeans rigorously, and that when they did try to enforce them they were largely ineffective. Men of standing with a mind to go to India do not seem to have had any great difficulty in persuading the Company to let them go, either in or out of its service.[7] European artisans and mechanics were also permitted to settle in India to work on private projects; in 1778, for instance, the Court of Directors granted the request of a group of private merchants for eighteen craftsmen to be sent out to them.[8] For those who could not obtain official permission there were many loopholes, such as foreign ships and desertion from the Company's ships or from the Company's European regiments. Once in India, private Europeans were not subjected to effective control. An attempt to compile a register of them in 1770 was a total failure.[9] Only spasmodic and largely unsuccessful efforts were made to confine those without special permission to Calcutta. Indeed Warren Hastings wrote:

> I would by no means desire nor would I consent to exercise the rigour of the Company's orders on every unlicenced person who may be found in India and has demeaned himself peaceably and quietly to the inhabitants of the country and obediently to the orders of the government. . . .[10]

Before 1785 no member of the Bengal Council seems to have believed that large-scale European settlement in India was desirable as an abstract proposition, but all were prepared to support individual applications to rent land. The Council, divided in opinion as to whether the Court of Directors had authorised them to permit Europeans to hold land outside Calcutta,[11] referred the question to London, but received no answer. In the meanwhile, however, three grants were made for sugar plantations, at least two large grants were approved for growing indigo, and other areas were allocated for canal cutting and mining. The applicants were permitted to occupy their land as the tenants of the local *zamindar* or other Indian landholder, usually for a term of twenty or thirty years, but in one instance for one hundred years and in another for life. At least one grant was made to a European in perpetuity.[12]

The official policy of the Company, both in London and in Calcutta, was to preserve 'that freedom of trade which is so necessary to the prosperity of the country'.[13] A policy of free trade was of course primarily intended to encourage Indian merchants, but it is at least arguable that the main beneficiaries were in fact private Europeans. The Company did not take kindly to competition where its 'investment' of piecegoods for London might be endangered, and it maintained monopolies over the production of salt, saltpetre and opium. In other respects, however, the European trader was not obstructed, and when new commodities such as sugar and indigo were being developed for export to Europe the Company declined to become directly involved in their production, leaving this to private initiative. Private European enterprise also profited by the Company's policy of entering into contracts for building, shipping, or supplies in Bengal, rather than undertaking these services itself.[14]

During this period the Bengal government was generally sympathetic to propositions from individual Europeans which seemed likely to contribute to the prosperity of the province. Convinced, like nearly all his contemporaries, that Bengal was in a state of decline, Warren Hastings warmly welcomed any 'enterprize that offers prospects of extending our trade, increasing our wealth, and eventually opening a new source of income for the Company'.[15] Philip Francis believed that Europeans had a useful function in introducing Indians to new crops and new techniques.[16] The Court of Directors in London were also favourably inclined to individual enterprise, with the clear reservation that they would not countenance any project likely to be offensive to interests in Britain. In response to pressure from English calico printers they ordered the Supreme Council to withdraw their support from a private European factory printing cotton goods,[17]

and they also instructed them to revoke mining grants that might endanger the export of British metals to India.[18]

Thus far from shielding Bengal from the impact of European enterprise, as its critics in the early nineteenth century maintained that it had done, before 1785 at least, the East India Company encouraged the individual European and provided him with security, with a market, and, as will be shown later, with a considerable part of his capital. Shortage of capital and high rates of interest were an acute problem. The need to avoid a heavy outlay of fixed capital and to ensure quick returns was an important factor in all private undertakings. Even in 1753 the 'common land interest' paid by Europeans was said to be 10 or 12 per cent.[19] In 1766 the Company prohibited the charging of more than 12 per cent on loans except at respondentia,[20] and 12 per cent was made the legal maximum in the Regulating Act of 1773. The available evidence for the late 1760s and early 1770s suggests that, subject to much fluctuation for individual circumstances, most Europeans paid from 8 per cent to 10 per cent; when no interest rate was mentioned in a transaction the Supreme Court awarded 10 per cent.[21] By the 1780s rates were rising: even the Governor General had to pay 12 per cent on his loans,[22] and in some cases a 'premium' was added to the legal maximum.[23]

Most European borrowing was on personal security only, borrowing on the security of landed property being of necessity confined to Calcutta. During this period loans seem to have been negotiated directly between borrower and investor. The two major Calcutta banks, the General Bank of India and the Bengal Bank, did not begin operations on a large scale until 1786,[24] and the houses of agency, which were later to become the medium through which concerns such as silk works and indigo plantations were financed, were still in their infancy by 1785;[25] although there is evidence that the system of borrowing through agency houses was beginning to come into existence.[26] The extent to which European enterprise was financed by Indian capital cannot be precisely determined, but the indications are that the degree of dependance was considerable. Case after case argued before the Calcutta Mayor's Court shows that Europeans traded on the capital of their *banyans,* or Indian agents; or, to be more exact, that in many instances *banyans* traded on their masters' name and authority. When Europeans began to sink money in buildings and equipment part of it still seems to have been borrowed from *banyans.* One well-documented example is that of James Keighley, Resident at the Company's silk filatures at Boalia, who also put up filatures of his own there. Keighley borrowed through his *banyan,* Dattaram Ghose, and had to agree to Dattaram Ghose's becoming the 'dewan or head sircar of the factory', and participating 'in the advantages thereof'.[27] Other Indians could sometimes be persuaded to forego the extra interest obtainable from loans uncontrolled by the Supreme Court and to lend money to Europeans, either for the sake of greater security or for the political advantages to be gained from such loans. Maharaja Nabakrishna (known as Nobkissen by the English) was one of those willing to make a young

European 'what he called, a great man, as he said he had made others . . .'[28] by lending him money. Noblissen also had Rs. 8,000 invested at 10 per cent in the New Harbour scheme.[29]

For some Europeans support by the Company provided a means of avoiding loans at high interest. When the Supreme Council considered that a project was of particular benefit to the public, loans were sometimes offered at special rates. But as most forms of private investment in eighteenth-century Bengal were intended either to provide a service for the Company or to sell goods to it, it seems to have been more common for interest rates to have been offset in the terms of contracts made by the Company. The prices which the Company paid were usually generous, and a proportion of them, generally a third, was received in advance. In certain contracts options were included for eventual purchase by the Company of works and stock; several undertakings were undoubtedly begun with the sole object of selling them to the Company. In the Company's generosity to individual projects there seems to be a mixture of motives characteristic of Hastings's administration; indulgence to favoured individuals was combined with a genuine desire to diversify the economy of Bengal as widely as possible.

To a Frenchman visiting Bengal in 1789 the city of Calcutta symbolised 'the opulence and power of the conquerors of India'.[30] The most spectacular object in Calcutta, the new Fort William, was built by the Company, costing them £1,300,000 between 1758 and 1772. Apart from Fort William and new cantonments for the army begun in 1765, the Company did not of itself undertake large building projects. Its total expenditure on civil building in the fifteen years after Plassey amounted to only £190,000.[31] The Governor General, the Commander-in-Chief, most of the public offices, and the Supreme Court were all accommodated in rented houses.[32] The Company's need for suitable houses to rent, together with the demand for town and 'garden' houses for the rapidly increasing numbers of Company servants and other Europeans living in Calcutta, many of whom had a highly-developed taste for spaciousness and display, created most attractive opportunities for investment in land and buildings. Innumerable letters complain of the iniquitous level of rent, while it was said to be 'a circumstance universally known, and admitted, that 20 per cent, is the interest, usually paid, and expected on buildings in this country. . . . .'[33]

The boom in European building in Calcutta after Plassey would repay study from such sources as the register of deeds, parts of which W.K. Firminger transcribed in *Bengal Past and Present*.[34] As *zamindar* under the grant from the Nawabs, the Company alienated land in Calcutta by deeds called *pattas*. The Company's servants regarded *pattas* as conveying 'an absolute property to the grantee', subject only to a ground rent of Rs. 3 per *bigha* and the Company's right to revoke the grant in cases of public necessity. Decisions of the Supreme Court after 1774 confirmed the rights of those who held *pattas* and denied the Company's claim to be able to annul them, even with adequate compensation.[35]

When the expansion of the European part of Calcutta began, certain Company servants seem to have been quick to obtain *pattas* for extensive areas.[36] The available evidence suggests that such grants were generally sold outright to those willing to build on them rather than being let on building leases which were so common in contemporary London. Certain names occur frequently on the register of deeds, suggesting that individuals speculated in housebuilding on a considerable scale. Prominent among Calcutta property developers appear to have been Richard Barwell, the Venetian Edward Tiretta, the missionary John Zachariah Kiernander, and Gokul Ghosal the famous *banyan* of Harry Verelst. The two most esteemed European architects, Colonel John Fortnom, the Company's Civil Architect, and Thomas Lyon, who had served his apprenticeship in London at the 'art and mistery of a carpenter and housebuilder' before coming to Calcutta to work on the fort,[37] both bought land and built houses on their own account.[38] Lyon's most famous work, his building for the Company's writers, was put up at his own expense on land granted to him by the Company by a *patta* of November 1776. The Company leased the apartments from him and after February 1779 from Richard Barwell who bought the building from Lyon, later paying him SRs 40,000 to add a 'range of boutiques' to it.[39] Indians acted as architects as well as Europeans. When Antonio Tremamondo wanted to build a riding school he commissioned 'Cossaul Mistry', 'a well-known master bricklayer' to undertake the work for Rs 24,000.[40] The quantity of European building done in Calcutta after 1756 was very remarkable; to sophisticated tastes the quality was less impressive.

> 'The quarter inhabited by the English . . .', a recent arrival commented in 1773, 'is laid off in regular and wide streets with spacious and showy houses, such as in appearance eclipse, (not to speak of London) almost anything in Paris or Italy. I say in appearance for they will not bear an examination, they are all of brick plaistered over and whitewashed, but all attempt some order or architecture and you see nothing but porticos, columnades, galleries, etc. etc. some few in good taste, several tolerable, and many more wretchedly bad.'[41]

Navigation of the Hughli was difficult and dangerous and the port facilities at Calcutta were inadequate even before the great expansion of the city. Various attempts were made by private individuals to improve the port and to provide access to Calcutta for East Indiamen and large ships of the line. In 1769 Colonel Archibald Campbell, the future Governor of Madras, and Major (later Colonel) Henry Watson, the Company's Chief Engineer, were given a grant for ninety-nine years of seventy-two acres on the Hughli at Kidderpur on which to construct dry and wet docks. Campbell relinquished his share to Watson, who imported £10,000 worth of iron from Britain and claimed that he had spent more than £50,000 by 1775.[42] A dockyard was established where Watson built two pilot sloops for the Company and in 1781 launched the first European ocean-going ship to be built at

Calcutta. But the main project for the Kidderpur docks was never completed. In 1777 Watson stopped work, alleging that the Company had allocated part of the area of his grant to someone else, and in 1779 he was dealt a severe blow when the Supreme Court ruled that he must relinquish a further part to Gokul Ghosal, the holder of the original *patta*.[43] In 1783 Watson was claiming that the Company owed him £200,0000 for breach of contract.[44] His losses must have been heavy, although William Hickey, who examined his papers after his death, states that he left a large fortune.[45]

A rival scheme for improving the navigation of the Hughli was equally unsuccessful. In 1770 Benjamin Lacam, an overseer of the fort, was awarded a contract to produce *chunam*, or lime, in the Sundarbans for the Company's works. He raised a capital of over three *lakhs* with two partners, and shipped his *chunam* to Calcutta from a site near the mouth of the Hugli, which he called New Harbour. By 1773 he had turned his attention to constructing a deep-water port at New Harbour and to opening up an alternative channel to the one used by shipping going up to Calcutta. He was granted a *patta* for 500 *bighas*, ordered equipment for a dry dock from Britain, raised more loans—mostly from prominent Company servants, and was negotiating the sale of shares of one sixth in his project at Rs. 50,000 each. In 1776, however, the grant was annulled by the Supreme Council on the ground that Lacam had abused the right given to him to levy tolls at New Harbour. With £30,000 spent at New Harbour and owing £20,000 to his creditors, Lacam was declared bankrupt, and no further work was ever done on New Harbour. By astonishing persistence and after two committees of the House of Commons had considered his case Lacam won an annuity of £1,000 a year from the Company in 1809. In spite of the innumerable manifestos, petitions, and memorials issued by Lacam, it is still hard to be certain that there was not some element of fraud in his project.[46]

The only scheme for improving the navigation of Calcutta to be completed during this period was the canal or *nalla* constructed by Colonel William Tolly to provide easier access to Calcutta for river traffic from eastern Bengal. In 1777 Tolly was given permission to cut his canal from the Hughli to the Baliaghata salt lake seven miles away. After the completion of the canal he was given authority for twelve years to levy tolls for its use and to hold land on its banks where he could establish markets.[47] The canal, completed with the aid of a loan of a *lakh* of rupees from the Company, evidently provided a substantial income for its proprietor from market dues and tolls; in 1787 Tolly's widow was able to lease out the canal with some other property for a rent of Rs. 60,000 a year,[48] and she directed in her will that her right to it should not be sold for less than four *lakhs* of sicca rupees.[49]

In expectation of a large surplus revenue from the grant of the *diwani*, the Company ordered its servants to increase their purchases of goods for export to London as rapidly as possible. Of all commodities produced in Bengal, raw silk

seemed most assured of an expanding market, provided that certain defects that had made Bengal silk unpopular with British manufacturers could be eliminated. Silk wound in the traditional Bengal manner had only limited uses in Europe and was to be replaced as widely as possible by silk wound by the method currently used in northern Italy. This was to be taught by Italian and French artisans sent out by the Company in 1769, and filatures for Company in 1769, and filatures for winding silk were to be built according to their instructions.[50] The new filatures were elaborate undertakings: their size was reckoned by the number of 'basons', each heated by its own furnace, in which the silk was separated from the cocoons before being wound off on a reel,[51] and their buildings included storage houses for cocoons, ovens for killing the worms, and warehouses for silk. Some of the new filatures were built by the Company, but others were put up with private capital, either by arrangement with the Company or as independent speculations. At Boalia, for instance, the Company owned filatures containing 204 basons, but the Resident's private filatures contained 294;[52] the first silk filatures at Malda were built on the initiative of the Resident;[53] and while the Company owned extensive filatures at Kasimbazar, there were also private ones, such as those put up by Thomas Chapman and James Worship which cost them between three and four thousand pounds.[54] Samuel Touchet set up 'on his own private credit, . . . a most extraordinary and extensive silk manufactory', part of an elaborate experiment which included a sugar plantation and rum distillery, at Umedpur in the Twenty-four Parganas.[55]

Private filatures no doubt sold part of their silk to 'country' traders, to the foreign companies, or to make up the 'privilege' of officers on East Indiamen; but the greater part was intended for the Company. The Company's silk was provided by contract for a stipulated quantity, usually to be delivered over a period of three years, at a price, a proportion of which was paid in advance. The price reached such heights that the Court of Directors sent orders in August 1781 for silk to be struck out of the list of goods to be purchased in Bengal, and later began prosecutions against the contractors and those who had awarded their contracts. Evidence produced in the Court of Chancery in London and in the Supreme Court in Calcutta shows beyond any doubt that the Company had been grossly overcharged for its silk in the 1770s.[56] On the other hand, inordinate profits from collusive contracts had enabled individuals to invest much larger sums in expensive filatures than would have been possible if they had been forced to raise all their capital from their own resources. A more rigorous examination of silk prices paid by the Company is probably one of the reasons why private filatures disappeared in the early nineteenth century, and why Committees of the House of Commons were told in 1831 and 1832 that such filatures could no longer survive.[57]

An undertaking of a kind similar to the private silk filatures was John Prinsep's factory for making chints, that is for printing and staining calicoes. Prinsep, who had been apprenticed to a linen draper in London and had considerable experience

in printing textiles, was a man of great enterprise and ingenuity, a future Director of the Company and the first of many Prinseps to be associated with India.[58] In 1773 he was given a grant of 600 *bighas* at Palta, fifteen miles north of Calcutta on the Hugli, and a contract to print at least 45,000 pieces of cloth at one rupee per piece for ten years. He built his factory with the aid of a loan from the Company of two *lakhs* of rupees,[59] and presumably installed the machinery for printing with copper plates which he himself had used in London and which was enabling British calico printers successfully to imitate cloth stained or painted in India.[60] So direct a challenge did not pass unnoticed. In 1782 British calico printers petitioned the House of Commons against 'a new manufactory of printing' set up in India 'under the superintendance of artists from this country'.[61] Since Prinsep's chintz had sold at a loss in London in any case, the Directors ordered that his contract be discontinued and that no further consignments of textiles printed in India should be included in the Bengal 'investment'.[62] Although the Company had no further use for the factory at Palta, one of the clauses in Prinsep's contract obliged them to take the buildings from him at a valuation fixed by arbitration at over two *lakhs* of rupees.[63]

Prinsep intended to print his chintz with dyes made from plants grown at Palta. He began to experiment with the cultivation of indigo, and the result of his experiments encouraged him to believe that indigo could be grown in large quantities in Bengal for export to Europe. If this venture succeeded the Company might be able to recover a valuable part of their trade. In the seventeenth century the Company had imported indigo, made at Agra or in Gujarat, until Indian indigo had been driven out of the European market by competition from America and the West Indies. But with the rapid expansion of the British textile industry and the outbreak of the American Revolution the prospects for Indian indigo seemed greatly improved. In November 1779 Prinsep persuaded the Supreme Council to make him a grant for life of 5,000 *bighas* on the opposite side of the Hugli to Palta, on condition that the land was used solely for indigo,[64] and in January 1780 he wrote that he had three plantations under cultivation.[65] Prinsep was later to describe indigo plantations as 'those undertakings which I charge myself with having first introduced, and encouraged to be set on foot by others'.[66] Whether he was in fact the first European to make indigo in Bengal on a large scale is, however, a matter of dispute, at least two competitors also claiming the honour. Louis Bonnaud, a Frenchman with experience of West Indian indigo, set up a factory between Chandernagore and Chinsura in 1778,[67] while one Carel Blume established works at Hughli in 1778 or 1779.[68] By 1783 the first indigo factories were being set up in the Tirhut district of Bihar, later to be a great stronghold of European indigo manufacture.[69] First in the field or not, Prinsep alone secured a contract in 1779 to supply indigo to be shipped to Europe by the Company, and retained his monopoly until 1786 when contracts were given to five other makers of indigo as well as to him.[70]

The manufacture of indigo required skill and experience, but it did not require a heavy financial outlay. There were two basic processes: fermenting the leaves of the indigo plant by 'steeping' them in one set of vats, and causing the liquid indigo to precipitate by 'beating' in another.[71] Large vats were the main item of expense. The estimated value of two sets of works in Bihar in 1786 was only Rs. 12,000 and Rs. 10,000 respectively.[72] At this rate, it is not surprising that indigo factories proliferated; Prinsep estimated that fourteen had been set up by 1785.[73] It seems unlikely, however, that many of the early indigo factories grew the indigo which went into their vats. Only a small proportion of what Prinsep provided for the Company in the early years of his contract can have come from the Palta plantation. An unsympathetic observer noticed that Prinsep's agents were making large purchases of Indian-grown indigo in Oudh and Bihar at a fifth of the price he received from the Company.[74] Charles Grant, the future Chairman of the Company, owned a plantation near Malda,[75] but he seems to have been an exception; nearly all the European factories obtained their indigo from Indian sources. Evidence given before the Indigo Commission of 1860 shows that even then Europeans found it cheaper to advance money to Indian cultivators to grow indigo for them rather than to grow indigo themselves.[76] In the eighteenth century there can have been even less inducement for Europeans, supposing that they could obtain sufficient land, to spend large sums at high rates of interest on clearing it for a crop the produce of which, as Prinsep wrote, 'cannot be gathered of several years after'.[77] The sums advanced to Indian cultivators were large, Rs. 32,000 being paid out in one year from three Tirhut factories,[78] but the return was much quicker than on money sunk in plantations. The chief problem facing the early indigo factories was to persuade the *raiyats* to increase the area under cultivation and to improve the quality of the crop to make it acceptable to the European market.

Sugar was another crop which seemed to provide profitable openings for European participation. The first Europeans to make sugar in Bengal were not aiming at selling their sugar in London, but were trying to compete with Chinese and Javan sugar in the entrepot markets of western India,[79] or to distill rum to sell to the British forces stationed in India. In the 1770s three separate attempts were made in Bengal to grow sugarcane and to manufacture sugar on West Indian lines. Plantations were set up at Umedpur in the Twenty-four Parganas, at Apail in Dinajpur, and at Suksaghur in Nadia, where five partners joined in a particularly ambitious and costly project. At both Apail and Suksaghur the Company made grants of 10,000 *bighas* for growing cane; at Suksaghur and Umedpur West Indian machinery for crushing the cane and boiling and refining the sugar was imported from Britain with European artisans to work it; and at all three places some rum and refined sugar was made. But by 1785 all three projects had failed and their proprietors had suffered heavy losses. It seems clear that the profit on sugar and rum was not sufficient to justify the very heavy initial outlay on plantations and

equipment; at Suksaghur Rs. 150,000 were said to have been spent before any return was received. In spite of these failures, Europeans continued to make sugar and rum in Bengal, but on the same principle that most men made indigo, that is that it was necessary to rely on Indian-grown sugarcane rather than to grow it for themselves. Apart from another unsuccessful attempt to establish a plantation in the 1790s, Europeans confined themselves to refining and distilling raw sugar delivered to them in return for advances paid to Indian cultivators of sugarcane.[80]

The ubiquitous Prinsep also played a prominent part in attempts to develop the mineral resources of the Company's new provinces. He claimed to have discovered deposits of copper in the Bihar districts of Rohtas and Monghyr, and in 1780 persuaded the Company to permit him to mine the copper for thirty years and to issue coinage on their behalf, in which his copper was to be mixed with imported copper.[81] The coinage was manufactured at a mint which Prinsep set up at his factory at Palta at a cost of Rs. 60,000.[82] As with the chintz contract, the Directors intervened, ordering the contract for coinage to be annulled and the grant for mining copper to be revoked.[83] Their decision was clearly influenced by a remarkable memorandum from one of their number, Francis Baring, pointing out various loopholes for Prinsep's personal profit, and concluding that if 'mines are permitted to be opened in India, . . . a few years will enable them to supply their own wants, and totally annihilate the exportation from hence of copper, lead and iron'. Not only would the Company lose its exports, but as 'saltpetre is already produced in great abundance, to which if the metals are added, altogether may furnish the means of rendering that country independent of Great Britain . . .'.[84] Producing accounts to show that he had made substantial losses both on his mines and on his mint, Prinsep demanded indemnification for breach of contract. The case again went to arbitration and again Prinsep was successful, the Company having to pay him Rs 165,389, his own figure for compensation.[85] Skilful drafting of contracts evidently contributed a major part of the fortune of £40,000 with which he left India in 1788.[86]

Europeans also worked lead in Bihar. In March 1778 Archibald Keir, a veteran free merchant, obtained a lease for thirty years from the Raja of Ramghar of all the lead and certain other minerals in his *zamindari*. The lease was confirmed by the Supreme Council.[87] 'Totally disapproving of all such grants under any circumstances whatever', the Directors ordered that Keir's lease be annulled.[88]

Attempts by Europeans to exploit mineral deposits in western Bengal began rather earlier than in Bihar. In 1774 a group of Company servants stationed at Burdwan reported that they were obtaining coal from six mines in the Birbhum district. They offered to produce 10,000 *maunds* (about 360 tons) a year for the Company if they were given exclusive possession of the mines for eighteen years.[89]

The coal proved to be of inferior quality, and the workings were abandoned, not to be reopened until 1814.[90] Iron ore was also known to exist in the same area. In 1778 John Farquhar, who was later to be superintendent of the Company's powder works, asked for permission to mine the ore and cast it into shot and cannon for the Company.[91] Permission was granted and he was advanced Rs 15,000 to undertake experiments with small cannon. Although Farquhar constructed a dam and canal to bring water to drive the 'bellows wheel' for his furnace,[92] the scheme was evidently a failure.

The extent to which Europeans were prepared to risk their money on a variety of obviously hazardous projects is very striking. As was to be expected many of the projects failed and many of the projectors burnt their fingers. Tht Kidderpur docks, the New Harbour, the Palta chintz factory, the mining ventures, and the sugar plantations on West Indian lines all failed completely, while the private silk filatures were to disappear gradually. But Philip Francis was being unusually imperceptive when he wrote: 'Exclusive of public employments, or contracts with the India Company, there is no fair occupation for the industry of Europeans in Bengal. Every enterprize they engage in, whether of foreign commerce, or internal improvement, leads them into distress if it does no[t] end in their ruin'.[93] Greater realism would be required, and the Company would be less accommodating to the needs of individuals, but there was an assured future for private European investment in Bengal.

The number of ventures embarked upon by Europeans before 1785, whether successful or not, suggests that contrasts, so often made by contemporaries, between Bengal and the colonies of European settlement in North America and the West Indies were less real than was commonly supposed. There seem to have been far more Europeans in Bengal than the Company were prepared to acknowledge; and the European population was beginning to show an assertiveness and truculence characteristic of European communities in other parts of the British Empire. In 1779 the European inhabitants of Calcutta petitioned the House of Commons for their 'rights inherent in English men'.[94] A year later James Augustus Hicky used his *Bengal Gazette* to lampoon the Governor General, councillors, judges and other dignitaries. When action was taken against him he appealed to the rights of the free-born Englishman to freedom of the press.[95] Most threatening of all were the petitions and meetings of protest against Pitt's India Act in 1785.[96] In 1788 Prinsep asked specifically to be allowed 'to represent the body of indigo planters at home, in the same character and capacity as those gentlemen who act for the West India and American colonies'.[97] Pressure from the European community was met by restrictions by the Company. The tolerance of the Hastings era was replaced by a policy of firmness under Cornwallis and by the enforcement of controls on European landholding in Regulations enacted in 1793 and 1795.[98] A conflict had begun which was to last far into the nineteenth century.[99]

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71. *Reports and Documents on Cotton-wool, Raw Silk and Indigo*, pt. iii, 18-19.
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98. Regulations xxxviii and xlviii.

99. Professor Ashin Das Gupta of Presidency College, Calcutta, kindly read a draft of this paper and made several most helpful suggestions. I was enabled to collect material in India through the generosity of the Central Research Fund of London University, the Drapers' Company, and King's College, London. I am extremely grateful to the Chief Justice of West Bengal for permission to consult the archives of the Calcutta High Court and to the committee of the Calcutta Bar Library Club for access to MSS in their possession.

P. J. Marshall

The Contribution of Missionaries to Education in Bengal During the Administration of Lord Hastings, 1813-23

The revised Charter of 1813 committed the East India Company Government to the encouragement of education in India, empowering it to spend a lakh of rupees per year for this purpose out of the surplus revenues. Hitherto education had been largely neglected by the Company, except for a little patronage of Hindu and Muslim learning; the Act of 1813 directed that more efforts should be made to foster and revive this culture, and that contemporary Western learning should also be introduced.[1] For the next 22 years these twin aims were officially pursued; one can best sum the policy up in the term "engraftment", for it was hoped that Western learning could somehow be grafted onto the Hindu and Islamic systems.[2] This period ended in 1835, when Bentinck decided that Government patronage should be given instead to Western learning through the medium of English.

Lord Moira, who arrived in Calcutta in October 1813, tended to emphasise vernacular elementary rather than classical higher education, and the introduction of Western rather than the revival of traditional Indian learning.[3] But the Bengal Government as such achieved hardly anything in this field during his administration, owing mainly to the wars with the Gurkhas, the Pindaris and the Marathas which preoccupied his attention and left little in the way of a revenue surplus until 1823.[4] In spite of this, however, the period does mark a highly important stage in the development of modern Indian education thanks to the efforts of various private societies, and the contributions of Moira and of members of his Government were made through these, in their personal rather than in their official capacities.[5]

One can distinguish three groups which were active in the unofficial educational activities of the years 1813-23. There were a few individual British officials, merchants and Army officers, of whom William Butterworth Bayley and Sir Edward Hyde East, the Chief Justice of Bengal, were among the most prominent; secondly, there was a group of well-to-do Bengalis in Calcutta, in religious and social outlook both liberal, such as Ram Mohun Roy, and conservative, such as Radha Kanta Deb, whose greatest achievement was the foundation of the Hindu College in 1817; and there were the missionaries with which this article is especially concerned. These three groups cooperated frequently with each other—indeed one of the remarkable features of those years was the degree to which men with

different ultimate objects and viewpoints succeeded in working together for the promotion of education ; an important factor in the success of their efforts.

The 1813 Charter which inaugurated a new era in Indian education also made it possible for missionaries to work in India on a legal footing.[6] In fact, they were already established there, in spite of the East India Company's hostility; the Baptist William Carey went to North Bengal in 1793, moving in 1800 to the Danish settlement of Serampore to join his newly-arrived colleagues Joshua Marshman and William Ward. There they found a sanctuary, in which they could set up their printing-press, compile their dictionaries and grammars of Bengali and other Sanskritic languages, publish their translations of the Bible and may other religious and literary works, and carry on their studies in natural history.[7] Most of their enormous and diverse achievement is beyond the scope of this article, but their contributions to education were not less than to linguistics or botany. Carey started experimenting with elementary schools within a year of his arrival in Bengal ;[8] the work expanded after 1800 when a few more were established in Hooghly, Dinajpur and Jessore districts.[9] Of the Serampore Trio it was Marshman who had had the most varied and successful teaching experience before leaving England, and he therefore assumed the main responsibility for their educational work in Bengal. Well before the 1813 Charter Act had removed the major political obstacles, Marshman had envisaged a greatly extended network of elementary schools with a wide curriculum, including an introduction to history, geography and science.[10]

This could only be feasible if they were managed on the monitorial system, which in England by 1813 had become the fashionable panacea for the problem of providing elementary education at a time when qualified teachers were very scarce, especially for the rapidly-growing population of the new industrial cities. It was developed during the 1790s by Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell ; the latter had been chaplain at Madras and superintendent of a military orphan school there. Finding the teachers uncooperative, he adopted the south Indian practice of using the senior boys, known as monitors, to teach what they had learnt to their juniors.[11] After he returned to England in 1796 he started applying the system in English schools, as Lancaster was also doing at about the same time. Both of them produced a series of little textbooks from which the children were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and Christian religious instruction ; the curriculum seldom at this time included more than these and in many schools did not extend so far. In reality there was little or no teaching, in the proper sense of the word ;[12] the syllabus was simply regarded as matter which had to be learnt by heart, and the duty of the master was mainly to see that the monitors gave the right bits to the right class at the right time. Lancaster and Bell both had a genuine interest in teaching, and some understanding of children ; they realised, for example, that the more that education can be made enjoyable to the pupils, the more effectively will they learn. The monitorial schools marked an improvement

on the low standards that prevailed in 18th century English elementary schools; they were systematically organised, there was a carefully-graded syllabus, and the children were not ill-treated.[13] By about 1840 however their limitations were becoming painfully obvious, and more urgency was given to efforts to train an adequate number of teachers.

Encouraged by Moira's interest, Marshman decided on a great extension of the Serampore schools in 1816, by using the monitorial system. In order to obtain public support he wrote the pamphlet *Hints Relative to Native Schools*,[14] and by the middle of 1817 he had succeeded in establishing over 100 elementary schools with 6700 regular pupils.[15] In 1818 the emphasis was changed from the foundation of new schools to the reform of the existing indigenous schools, through the introduction of text-books and periodic inspection; and in the same year Serampore College was founded for higher education in arts, science and theology. Most of the schools were however discontinued in 1824 owing to inadequate funds.[16]

Meanwhile Robert May of the London Missionary Society had started a group of elementary schools in and around Chinsura. He opened the first in 1814,[17] and his work attracted the attention of judge Watson of the Calcutta circuit,[18] and of Gordon Forbes, Commissioner for the Foreign Settlements.[19] In 1815 the latter recommended May's schools, by then increased to 15, to the Bengal Government for financial support, emphasising what he described as May's "extraordinary talents" as a teacher, and the care he took not to arouse the hostility of the people by tactless innovations. He hoped that May's work might serve as a pilot-project for general extension throughout the country.[20] The Bengal Government responded by giving a monthly grant of Rs. 600 for the schools[21]—increased to Rs. 800 in 1816;[22] the first instance of Government support for elementary schools.

May had increased the number of the schools to 36 by the time of his death in August 1818,[23] including some further up the Hooghly at Bankipur. His successor was J. D. Pearson, who found them too numerous and widely-scattered for efficient superintendence, and reduced them to 21 in 1823.[24] These schools, financially supported by the Government but superintended by an LMS missionary, continued until 1831, when Pearson died and Government support was withdrawn.[25]

As far as the Church of England was concerned, the most important figure in educational work at this time was Thomas Thomason, one of the chaplains at Calcutta. To him in fact must go the credit for devising the first detailed and comprehensive plan for education in the Bengal Presidency, which he drew up with Moira's encouragement early in 1814. It envisaged the establishment by Government of a high school in every district for the teaching of English and modern science, a Normal School at Calcutta for the training of teachers, and the encouragement of elementary vernacular schools in the villages. The syllabus for ethical teaching was to consist of selections from Muslim, Hindu and Christian sacred books.[26] The plan was thus for both primary and secondary education, and took account of both Western learning and the existing Indian cultural situa-

tion. In spite of Moira's interest, however, it was not adopted by the Government, for a number of reasons including probably its cost and the fear of arousing the suspicions of the people on religious grounds;[27] it preferred instead to experiment on a limited scale with May's methods around Chinsura. Thomason was very disappointed, so that when in 1816 he was approached by a group of Calcutta people for help in the founding of the Hindu College, he told them that while he strongly supported their object, they would be likely to get more effective help from Sir Edward Hyde East.[28]

Thomason in fact made his most notable contribution to education in Bengal as an agent of the Church Missionary Society, which had been founded in 1799 by the Evangelical wing of the Anglican Church. Its first educational venture was a school at Kidderpur, which was opened in 1816 on a piece of ground donated by Kali Shankar Ghosal, a friend of Ram Mohun Roy.[29] Unlike the schools at Serampore and Chinsura, English was taught here from the start, at the particular request of K. S. Ghosal himself;[30] it is thus in part an expression of the "Anglicist" movement among some of the inhabitants of Calcutta which in the same year was also responsible for the foundation of the Hindu College. The CMS also founded some purely Bengali schools in Calcutta, to a total of 8 by 1823, plus another—at Mirzapur—where English was taught.[31]

It was, however, Burdwan rather than Calcutta which developed as the most important centre of CMS educational work during Hastings' administration. This was due to the efforts of an Army officer stationed there, Captain Stewart, who started a group of Bengali elementary schools, also in 1816.[32] At his request the CMS gave first financial support and then in 1819 sent missionaries to superintend them.[33] By 1823 there were 1200 boys in 16 elementary schools, plus 55 in a "Central School" at which English (and Persian) were taught.[34]

The other Anglican society which was concerned with education at this time was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which represented the so-called High Church wing and enjoyed the patronage of the first Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Middleton, who arrived in 1814. It was the last to undertake schools in this period and confined its attention to Calcutta and its suburbs; they were started in 1818[35] and by 1823 comprised two "circles" of six schools each, including in both one in which English was taught.[36] The LMS[37] and the Baptists[38] also started a few elementary schools in and around the city, so that by 1823 there were about 28 of these altogether run by four different societies. The only group which at this time ventured beyond the Calcutta—Chinsura—Burdwan triangle in south-western Bengal were the Serampore missionaries, who by 1823 had established 15 Bengali and one Persian school at Dacca,[39] as well as a few at Katwa, and in Dinajpur, Jessore and Birbhum districts.[40] By this year, in short, there were about 160 Bengali elementary schools under the management of missionaries—including the "Government Schools" at Chinsura—plus at least four in which English and two in which Persian were taught.

After this outline of the missionary achievement down to the end of Hastings' administration, one should make an analysis of the content of the education which these schools aimed to provide. A network of indigenous elementary schools (*pathsalas*) existed in the province—most of the more substantial villages had one—but they did not aspire to teach more than reading, writing, arithmetic and accounts and sometimes a little religious literature,[41] printed textbooks were quite unknown in them, and even manuscripts were not used in all;[42] the teachers were on the whole not distinguished either for learning or character,[43] and took anything up to nine years to go through that very limited syllabus.[44] They charged fees,[45] which was one reason why the majority of boys never went to those schools at all. William Adam made a detailed survey of them in certain selected areas in 1835-7, and discovered that in Kalna thana (Burdwan district)—the best of those that he investigated—only 19.4% of boys of school-going age were in the *pathsalas*, 5% got some education at home, and 12.7% of the adult male population was literate.[46]

As compared with the indigenous schools, the mission schools made a valuable contribution in increasing the speed and effectiveness of the teaching of the basic "3Rs", in introducing printed textbooks, and in widening the syllabus. In contrast to the general trend of Government policy both before and after Hastings' administration, the missionaries believed that any sound system of education must start with teaching the pupil effectively to read and write his own mother-tongue; if the foundations were not thoroughly laid at the first stage, it would not be possible to build a satisfactory superstructure of higher education afterwards. They criticised the *pathsalas* because, in spite of the many years which their pupils spent in them, they still did not achieve a high standard in this,[47] and the missionaries therefore went to considerable trouble to adapt the monitorial system of Lancaster and Bell to Bengali conditions in such a way as to improve the teaching of the "3Rs". Marshman devised a series of "tables", containing the Bengali alphabet, words, paradigms of verbs, nouns and pronouns, sentences, numbers and arithmetical examples, which were printed at the Serampore Press and posted up in the school-rooms so that all the pupils could use them as examples for writing and reading,[48] under the guidance of the monitors. When they had gone through this elementary stage, the monitor dictated sentences from textbooks, written and printed by the Serampore missionaries, which were written down by pupils, read back and learnt by heart. The whole process was designed to practise them in writing, spelling, grammar and reading, simultaneously conveying "clear and distinct ideas to the mind".[49] The textbooks were each divided into sections so as to provide a graduated course; they included Aesop's Fables and Historical Anecdotes, as reading-lessons "illustrative of justice, fidelity, probity and humanity"; Arithmetic, including the "Jumidaree Papers"—local methods of accountancy, land conveyancing etc; a summary of the names and writings of Sanskrit authors; "Dig Dursuna"—"a miscellaneous collection of Truths and Facts" covering history,

science and ethics; a "View of the Solar System", with a glossary of technical terms; an "Epitome of Geography", including a map; and History and Chronology.[50] These booklets were composed of short sentences, or "maxims", such as "The Earth turns round on its own axis once in 24 hours, which forms day and night"; by 1818 a catechism, of set questions and answers, was appended to each and used by the superintendents who made regular visits to the schools to test the progress of the boys.[51] Marshman's course was thus designed to provide an effective grounding in the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, together with an introduction to modern knowledge and ethical values. Not the least point of interest was its blend of local and foreign elements; he realised that any understanding of the wider world must be based on an understanding of the situation in which the people had to live their lives. This was perhaps best symbolised in the geography textbook, which began with Bengal, continued into other parts of Asia, and ended with the rest of the world.[52]

Captain Stewart introduced a similar system, with a few modifications, into his schools at Burdwan, using some of the Serampore textbooks, one or two which he wrote himself, and others provided by the Calcutta School Book Society[53] which was set up in 1817 to commission a series of textbooks and to arrange for their printing and distribution at a low price. Robert May, however, did not use printed tables or textbooks at Chinsura; instead he relied upon wooden boards, on which the alphabet, words, sentences, figures etc. were painted.[54] As he did not have so many schools as the Serampore missionaries, and did not aspire to teach more than the elements, he was able to manage with this relatively cumbrous method. He thought it had advantages—it was more flexible, in that the board-lessons could be varied somewhat to suit individual schools, and it was more readily acceptable to the people, who were not used to reading anything printed.[55] J. D. Pearson, however, wanted to widen the curriculum, and started to introduce the Calcutta School Book Society's textbooks into the schools after May's death in 1818.[56]

The various attempts to widen the curriculum, by introducing the elements of history, geography and science, met with rather mixed success. William Butterworth Bayley examined the Chinsura schools in 1821, and reported that while many of the senior boys showed "a great facility in reading, in writing and arithmetic", they left the school too early—owing to their parents' desire for them to earn—for there to be much hope of educating them further.[57] George Mundy, acting superintendent during Pearson's furlough, made a similar comment in 1825; with some individual exceptions the boys could not "see what advantage is to be derived from a knowledge of the shape of the Earth, its dimension, revolutions etc.",[58] and a similar report came from at least one of the CMS missionaries at Burdwan.[59] On the other hand, Thomason was very pleased with the progress of the boys in the Bengali schools there when he visited them in 1819. They were reading textbooks on history, geography and astronomy, and he found them able

to explain the meaning of "difficult words . . . and give the sense of the different passages in which they are used, in their own language not in the words of the book so as to make it evident that they really understood what they were taught. . . . It was delightful to observe with what eagerness they sought instruction, and with what apparent satisfaction they repeated the subjects which came before them."[60] Even more consistently encouraging reports came from the English school at Burdwan; Thomason thought in 1823 that the top class had begun "to taste the pleasure of learning. They have a value for knowledge, as such".[61]

The reports from Burdwan (and Serampore)[62] were distinctly more satisfactory than from Chinsura, but the rather mixed results of the attempt to widen the curriculum is not surprising under the circumstances. There was in the first place little incentive for a boy to stay on at school after he had learnt the "3Rs" and accounts, plus at the most English or Persian, as there were at that time few jobs available which required a knowledge of Western learning. Secondly, the boys—and still more, their parents—would have found the new learning at best alien and at worst subversive of their religion;[63] at least painstaking and skilful teaching would have been needed to explain it adequately to them, but this of course was simply not available; apart from the reliance on monitors, most of the schoolmasters understood it no better than their pupils. Nevertheless it is clear that some of the boys began to sense the possibilities of the new learning; the missionaries were at least providing an opportunity which had not existed previously for the more intelligent of them to widen their horizons, and the obstacles in their way were not insurmountable.

Apart from a genuine desire to advance learning for its own sake, the missionaries also believed that Western science would undermine belief in the Hindu scriptures; the new geography, for example, could hardly be reconciled with the *Puranas*.[64] It never occurred to them at this time that it might not be reconcilable with the Bible either; it was not until after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 that the problem of the compatibility of Christianity and modern science became an acute and inescapeable question, and then they discovered, much to their chagrin, that the weapon which they had used so confidently against Hinduism and Islam was being turned against themselves.

The missionaries' ultimate evangelistic purpose also helps to explain why, in spite of the fact that they had to rely upon a system based on rote-learning, they were so concerned that the learning-process should be meaningful. Perowne wrote bluntly in 1822 "What we want is to get the people to *think*", and reported with satisfaction that the boys in the Burdwan English school now "think and reason, and frequently pretty correctly, even in support of their own customs . . . Some . . . are very shrewd, requiring an explanation of every thing."[65] The missionaries in fact wished to instigate an intellectual awakening, or even revolution, because they believed that as an inevitable consequence their pupils would realise what

they themselves thought to be the absurdity of the religion by which they appeared to be enslaved.[66] All this incidentally contrasts significantly with contemporary England; the last thing that the dominant public opinion there wanted was an education which would stimulate the masses to think of revolution, whether social or religious, and many elementary schools accordingly confined themselves to teaching children to read the Bible; even writing, to say nothing of history and science, was thought to have dangerous possibilities.[67] This is why the Serampore scheme in particular attracted the attention of the more progressive English educationists, and James Mill singled it out for enthusiastic praise, along with Bentham's *Chrestomathia*, in his article on Education in the Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1824.

On the question of ethical teaching in schools there was a general consensus, shared by men of all religions and of none, that it was very important, and that the lack of it in the *pathsalas* was one of their principal defects, and even more so the fact that their teachers apparently did not aspire to exercise any kind of moral influence over their pupils.[68] The only arguments were on how it should be inculcated, and of what kind it should be. Government officials tended to reflect a view that was then fashionable in England—and incidentally a powerful incentive to educational efforts there—that ethical teaching on a religious basis was essential for the general well-being of society, and they regarded it in particular as a preventive against crime. Moira expressed this view in his *Minute on the Judicial Administration of the Fort William Presidency*, dated 2 October 1815, and went on to suggest that village school-masters should be given "little manuals of religious sentiments and ethic maxims, conveyed in such a shape as may be attractive to the scholars; taking care that while awe and adoration of the Supreme Being are earnestly instilled, no jealousy be excited by pointing out any particular creed".[69] In this as in other matters concerning education, Hastings' Government achieved little or nothing in its official capacity, and it was left to the missionaries to make the major contribution towards translating his ideas into reality. Prior to this the Serampore missionaries had introduced specificially Christian religious teaching into their schools;[70] in the great expansion of 1816 and afterwards, however, this disappeared and was replaced simply by ethical teaching Christian in spirit but not in name; examples included "The eye of God is in every place beholding both the evil and the good"; "God hath created of one blood all the nations of the earth".[71] At Chinsura May used the writings of Ayyar, a "Tamul female philosopher" of whom he could approve, as the basis for the moral teaching in his schools;[72] no doubt the fact they they were financed by Government was one reason why he moved even further away from direct Christian religious teaching than did Marshman. Pearson, however, was not happy about this; he was much more of an orthodox missionary than May, and he started introducing the Christian scriptures into the Government schools, to be read simply as class-books without any attempt to expound them.[73] W. B. Bayley

was privately sympathetic, and although he warned Pearson to be careful he did not prohibit their use.[74]

A basically similar tendency was apparent in the schools at Burdwan, where Stewart at first introduced moral teaching, Christian in spirit rather than in name,[75] and which in practice served to prepare the ground for the introduction of the scriptures themselves into the schools. This proved easiest in the English school, where St. Matthew's Gospel was introduced in 1820,[76] and then two years later into the Bengali schools.[77] A similar process took place in the Baptist schools at Dacca, where the scriptures proved acceptable to the boys of the Persian school earlier than the Bengali elementary schools.[78] This can be explained by the great eagerness for an English or Persian education among a minority at least, which made them willing to accept the Christian scriptures in order to obtain it—and perhaps also to a great open-mindedness among these boys, who were older than the pupils of the elementary schools and tended to be above average in intelligence, and, therefore, more adventurous intellectually. Nevertheless one may well think that the replacement of general ethical teaching by specifically Christian religious instruction in the 1820s was, from the educational point of view at least, a retrograde step which tended to limit the value of the mission schools. It was not even as though it was possible to give really good Christian teaching in the schools; this would depend above all on the teachers, and as most of them were not Christians themselves, little could be expected.

Coming now to the question of language—Warren Hastings and Minto had given some Government patronage to traditional Hindu and Muslim learning through the medium of the Oriental classical languages, and although Moira preferred instead to support vernacular elementary schools, the original policy was reaffirmed in 1821 with the decision to found the Calcutta Sanskrit College.[79] The third possibility was English, which came distinctly into view for the first time during Moira's administration thanks largely to the growing desire for it among a section of the people of Calcutta. The missionaries in general at this time were in the vernacularist camp, though the Serampore group had Orientalist and the Anglicans had Anglicist leanings. All of them insisted on a thorough preliminary grounding in the mother-tongue as the basis of their schemes of education, and Marshman in particular thought it necessary to give lengthy and repeated explantations of why the Serampore missionaries were giving few facilities for the learning of English. His motives were partly purely educational and partly economic; he declared flatly "the hope of imparting efficient instruction to [the people] . . . in a language not their own is completely fallacious".[80] He was concerned with mass education, and believed that the only hope of introducing Western learning to the people as a whole was by translating it into their vernaculars. He saw that only a few individuals would have the opportunity and ability to learn English thoroughly enough to widen their cultural and intellectual horizons;[81] facilities for them were provided at Serampore College, but he did

not intend to go to much trouble and expense to teach merely a smattering to enable young men to get minor clerical jobs in and around Calcutta, which was of course happening on a fairly large scale at that time. He painted a daunting picture of the likely results of such a policy; such men, he warned, "would scarcely remain tilling the ground, or labouring at a manual occupation"; "they would sally forth in hordes" to the big city, and the result would be a serious problem of urban unemployment.[82]

As already noted, however, the two Anglican societies, the CMS and the SPCK, put considerable stress on the teaching of English, and related their English schools at Burdwan and Calcutta systematically to their Bengali schools; they insisted that only the pupils who had distinguished themselves in the latter could proceed for further education to the former,[83] thereby ensuring that the boys who learnt English did not do so at the expense of their mother-tongue. The English schools thus became to all intents and purposes the secondary schools of the Anglican missions in Bengal. They were started in the hope, as Thomason expressed it, that they would train "a body of well-educated English scholars, who may form a corps of Translators, and may be employed . . . in diffusing knowledge among their countrymen. Having once opened to them the treasures of our own language, they may with great advantage labour to enrich their country"[84]—an interesting adumbration of the "downward filtration" idea that was adopted by the Government in 1835. The CMS school at Burdwan developed quite promisingly under the superintendence of the missionary John Perowne, although the boys tended to leave before they had progressed as far as the missionaries hoped. Perowne suggested giving a monthly stipend to the abler boys on condition that they stayed at school, which might counteract the economic compulsions on them to leave as soon as they had qualified themselves for a minor office job.[85] Perowne, however, fell ill in 1826 and had to return to England in the following year;[86] there was nobody else who could carry the school on and it had to close,[87] though it was reopened again in 1831.[88] The CMS school at Mirzapur (Calcutta) also ran into trouble in 1827 when the two missionaries who were responsible for it quarrelled bitterly with the local committee and resigned.[89] In spite of these vicissitudes it is clear that much of the credit which is normally given to Alexander Duff in the field of English education should go to the CMS, especially on account of the English school which they established at Burdwan in 1819.

In spite of Marshman's vigorous defence of the vernaculars as opposed to English, it was Persian which was the real rival of the latter, and which suffered as it made progress. Around 1820 Persian still constituted the normal "secondary education" for the upper classes in Bengal, Muslim and Hindu alike,[90] but although it continued in use in the courts until the late 1830s, demands were already being made for its abolition, with which the missionaries were on the whole sympathetic.[91] Nevertheless as long as it remained in official use there were requests for it in the schools, which they made some attempt to meet. Mention has already been

made of the successful Baptist Persian school in Dacca, and Persian was also taught in the so-called English school at Burdwan.[92]

As far as Sanskrit and Arabic were concerned, the Serampore Trio was the only missionary group at this period which gave them an important place in their education programme. This was partly because these two classical languages' main use was in higher education, and only the Trio concerned themselves with this level during Hastings' administration, through Serampore College. One may discount what superficially appeared to be its Anglican equivalent—Bishop's College at Sibpur—because whatever Bishop Middleton's original intentions may have been it developed after 1820 purely as an Anglican theological seminary.[93] Secondly, apart from Thomason, the Serampore Trio were the only missionaries during the period who were also philologists, and they were well aware of the integral connexion between the classical and the modern vernacular languages. This was expressed even in their syllabus for elementary schools, in part of which the pupils were to be taught 60 Sanskrit root-words and their Bengali derivatives, as well as the names and works of Sanskrit writers.[94] At Serampore College Sanskrit was in the early years the basic subject for study—or alternatively Arabic and Persian.[95] The Serampore missionaries translated into Indian terms, moreover, the usual contemporary arguments in favour of a classical education, through Greek and Latin, in Europe; they dilated on "the value of that habit of patient investigation which a few years' study of Sungskrit would form, and which would prepare the mind for the examination of every other subject".[96] At Serampore College the object was not to give the students "a light smattering of things . . . but . . . to strengthen the mind by inuring it to real labour", and they continued with a rather grim relish, "the committing of grammatical rules to memory tends to produce this robustness of mind".[97] And apart from the philological, intellectual and even moral benefits to be derived from a study of Sanskrit, the policy was basically in accordance with that of the Government, which in spite of Hastings' personal doubts was still committed to a fundamentally Orientalist programme in higher education. In any case in 1818 the Anglicist movement was at the most two years old, and still confined to a minority in Calcutta; for every student who sought an English education at the Hindu College, many more attended the Sanskrit *tols* which existed in all parts of the province.[98] The Serampore missionaries could fairly claim that they were acting in accordance with the realities of their situation, when they made Sanskrit rather than English the basic subject for study at Serampore College.

The College was open to both Christian and non-Christian students, and it had a dual purpose—of training ministers for the Indian church, and giving further education to the most intelligent boys from the elementary schools;[99] it can thus be regarded as the crown of their efforts both as missionaries and as educationists. In the eyes of the Trio, a Sanskrit education was if anything even more vital for students training for the ministry than for the others, as they realised

that they would not be effective missionaries to their countrymen unless they were steeped in Indian culture. The syllabus included theology, arts, and science subjects, and was at first summarised in the phrase "Eastern Literature and European Science"; in their own way the Serampore Trio thus took up the official attempt to "engraft" Western onto Indian learning. The medium of instruction was in practice Bengali, and English was taught to students who had made some progress in Sanskrit. Thus in this institution English, the Indian classical and vernacular languages, Eastern and Western learning, all found a place.

The Serampore missionaries were the only ones who undertook themselves to produce a comprehensive series of textbooks for use in the schools; the rest preferred to rely on the Calcutta School Book Society, for which the Serampore efforts provided an example.[100] This was founded in 1817, mainly at the instigation of Lady Hastings,[101] who took a genuine personal interest in all the educational ventures of the period; her husband the Governor-General became its first patron,[102] and in 1821 it received a Government grant.[103] Its first Managing Committee was a group of 24, including Hindus, Muslims, missionaries, business-men, army officers and officials; Radha Kanta Deb and Ram Kamal Sen, William Carey and Thomas Thomason, William Butterworth Bayley and Sir Edward Hyde East were all members, and its success was largely due to its ability to secure the co-operation of such a diverse collection of educational enthusiasts.[104] It was agreed that while books on ethics should be published, they should not be of any particular religious tendency.[105] The most pressing need was for Bengali books for the elementary schools, and it was accordingly decided to concentrate on this language to begin with,[106] though Sanskrit, Arabic and English books were not entirely neglected. By 1821 a comprehensive series of 16 had been published, covering the learning of the Bengali language and an introduction to arithmetic, ethics, geography, history and science, of which the great majority were contributed by missionaries.[107] The Society also made an arrangement to obtain some of the Serampore books on favourable terms,[108] of which by far the most successful proved to be the monthly magazine which the Trio published in Bengali and English between 1818 and 1821 —the *Dig Darshan*. This carried articles especially on history, geography and world affairs, and proved very popular; the CSBS had to print no less than 30,000 copies by 1821,[109] and they received reports of its being read aloud to appreciative audiences in villages even in the relatively remote Contai area.[110] Along with this the Serampore missionaries also started in 1818 the first Bengali newspaper, the *Samachar Darpan*, which continued successfully for 23 years.[111] Both these papers were primarily educational in purpose—having whetted the appetite for learning with their textbooks in the schools, these were intended to provide some useful and entertaining reading-matter for the new literates.[112]

Many of those involved in the CSBS were also responsible for the foundation, in September 1818, of the Calcutta School Society, whose main aim was to reform the *pathsalas* of Calcutta. For this also the Serampore missionaries had set the

example,[113] as during the same year they had switched their emphasis from the founding of new schools to the introduction of their textbooks into the existing schools. They came to the conclusion that they could most usefully employ their limited resources by complementing, so to speak, the efforts which the people themselves were making for education at their own expense. Under the revised plan the masters of the *pathsalas* continued to be paid by the parents of their pupils in the traditional way for the elementary stage of their education—the "3Rs" and accounts—and the Serampore missionaries offered their textbooks on history, geography, science and ethics to the schools, undertaking to pay the masters an additional fee according to the progress made by their pupils in learning their contents. For poor people who could not afford to pay fees to the masters, the missionaries continued some free schools on the original pattern.[114] By 1820 Marshman was able to report that the plan was functioning with some success, and as the teachers were still wholly responsible for the elementary stage they had an incentive to experiment with improved methods in order to qualify their pupils for embarking on the texabooks.[115] Another advantage of this plan was that it left the people with the responsibility for their own education which they had always exercised up to this time; a principle which was recommended by William Adam in 1838,[116] and incorporated into Government policy with the grants-in-aid system of 1854.

On the other hand May's object at Chinsura was not so much to improve the existing indigenous schools, but rather to develop a better system of elementary education which would supersede them. In 1815-6 Government officials such as Forbes and Edmonstone permitted themselves to hope that it might soon be possible to extend it throughout the country;[117] this did not of course prove practicable, partly on grounds of expense and partly because enough superintendents with May's own peculiar blend of tact, enthusiasm and teaching ability were impossible to obtain.[118] May's schools were thus a pilot-project which failed to germinate anything further, and it is not surprising that after 1823 their raison d'etre was increasingly questioned by the General Committee of Public Instruction,[119] which took the opportunity presented by Pearson's death in 1831 to discontinue them. One reason for their doubts was the idea that, being completely free schools financed by Government and superintended by a missionary, they discouraged local participation in education. The Bengal Government, together with May and Pearson themselves, hoped that wealthy local gentlemen might be persuaded to contribute to the schools, but except in two or three cases this was not forthcoming.[120]

May, however, was the individual mainly responsible for the foundation of the Calcutta School Society, and before his death (12 August 1818) he persuaded his fellow LMS missionaries and Gordon Forbes to give it active support.[121] Its most important work nevertheless turned out to be the improvement of the *pathsalas* of Calcutta by applying to them the 1818 methods of the Serampore missionaries;

their teachers were induced to accept CSBS textbooks, the schools were periodically inspected and the boys examined, and the teachers were rewarded according to their pupils' progress.[122] The leading part in this work was played by the Hindu members of the Committee, especially Radha Kanta Deb;[123] as has often been noted, the co-operation between Indians, missionaries and officials was a striking feature of both Societies, and an important reason for their success.[124] Another object of the CSS was to give opportunities to the best boys from the elementary schools to to proceed to further education, including English; at first this was done by founding 20 scholarships at the Hindu College,[125] and in 1823 the Society's own English school was started, and ably supervised by David Hare.[126] The CSS' purpose was to form "a body of qualified Teachers and Translators who may be instrumental in enlightening their countrymen",[127] which as we have seen was also the policy of the two Anglican missionary societies.

The missionaries were never satisfied with the quality of the teachers in their schools; not surprisingly in view of the general state of the teaching profession at that time, they were constantly complaining about their unreliability and inefficiency.[128] The monitorial system was of course designed for such a situation, but if the masters had little of the actual work of teaching to do, they were still responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The missionaries did attempt some systematic teacher-training at this period, but they were not very successful. May tried to train the most promising of his monitors at the Central School in Chinsura, but he discovered that very few of them were in fact willing to become teachers, and dismissed them.[129] The CMS had a slightly happier experience with the boys in their English School at Burdwan; this was not specifically a teachers' training establishment but it was hoped that a significant proportion of the boys would become teachers; some of them in fact did,[130] but many preferred to put their relatively advanced education to other purposes. The Serampore missionaries started a "Normal School" in 1816, to which some villages sent their teachers for training in the system;[131] but nothing more is heard of it as a separate institution after 1818; and it was apparently absorbed into Serampore College, one of whose functions was to train teachers.[132] But it was several years before it was in a position to do this effectively.

As regards the attitude of the local people to the schools, there is no doubt that after an initial period of doubt and suspicion, they became very popular. The early doubts were partly on religious grounds; both the Serampore Trio and Captain Stewart, for example, encountered the rumour that it was planned to ship the boys off to England and compel them to become Christians.[133] The main opposition to the establishment of mission schools came from the teachers of the *pathsalas*, who regarded them as rivals; and not without good reason; this was disarmed, however, by the simple expedient of inviting these men to become the masters of the new schools.[134] Within a year or two of the start of operations, at Chinsura, Serampore and Burdwan alike, reports of opposition practically

ceased, and the missionaries found themselves with the opposite problem—how to satisfy the numerous requests for new schools which were made to them by the villagers, which threatened to stretch their resources far beyond their limits.[135] There is no mystery in the popularity of these schools; they were free, they taught the subjects which the people wanted to learn with relative speed and effectiveness, and the Christian element in the curriculum need not be taken seriously by those who did not wish to do so. The Serampore missionaries had some success in persuading the people to contribute to the schools themselves; landowners provided houses for them, and in the village of Haripal no less than 83 of the inhabitants subscribed between 4 as. and Rs. 6 in 1818 towards a school there; not to mention larger donations from such men as Radha Kanta Deb, Kali Shankar Ghosal and Rasamay Dutt.[136]

The pupils of the mission schools were of all castes; in 1816 the proportion of Brahmins in the Serampore schools averaged about 30%,[137] at Chinsura 25%,[138] and probably about the same at Burdwan. This proportion later seems to have fallen somewhat at Chinsura, for which a detailed report for 1829 classified the pupils as 15% Brahmin, 15% Kayastha, 15% Vaidya, 45% Sudra, and 10% Muslim;[139] both here and probably also in Calcutta[140] there was by this time a lower proportion of high-caste boys than in the neighbouring *pathsalas*. It is not unfortunately possible to make exact statistical comparisons, but such evidence as there is suggests that in the province as a whole there was not a great deal of difference between the mission schools and the *pathsalas*. Adam investigated the caste of pupils in the latter in 1836-7, and found in Burdwan district 27½% Brahmins and 15% Kayasthas,[141] in Birbhum 18% Brahmins and 13% Kayasthas,[142] and a similar proportion in Murshidabad.[143] (Unfortunately, he did not survey Hooghly district). He noted that of 760 boys of the 16 lowest castes represented in the Burdwan district schools, 674 were in the 516 *pathsalas* and 86 in the 13 CMS schools;[144] certainly a higher proportion in the latter but not overwhelmingly so. In the English and Persian schools conducted by the missionaries the pupils were mainly high-caste—or Muslim in the case of the Baptist Persian school at Dacca[145]—and they were therefore similar in this respect to schools of the same kind conducted by non-missionaries.

Boys of different castes attended the *pathsalas* as well as the mission schools; the peculiar contribution of the missionaries was the division of their pupils into classes, and giving each his position in the class, simply according to academic merit. Little difficulty was experienced about this; Marshman reported in 1817 that in the Serampore schools the Brahmin boys "mingle with their school-mates in their various exercises, and in numerous instances give place without chagrin to their superior merit, when they rise in their respective classes . . . no wish has ever been expressed by them to be formed into a separate class".[146]

The difference between the pupils in the elementary mission schools and the *pathsalas* related more to parental income than to caste; the former were free,

and were welcomed and utilised primarily, but not exclusively, by those who could not easily afford to make the customary payments to the masters of the *pathsalas*.[147] The missionaries were thus able to claim not only that they were providing a better education, but that many would get no schooling at all were it not for their efforts.

As for the subsequent careers of the mission schools' pupils, detailed information is again scanty, but there are references to ex-pupils in a variety of employments including clerks, teachers, cultivators, weavers and merchants.[148]

Of those involved in the educational work of the missions at this time, the outstanding individual pioneers were perhaps Robert May of the LMS, Joshua Marshman of the Serampore Baptists, and the Anglican chaplain Thomas Thomason. May was the son of a sailor, and was born in 1788. He got his own elementary education by attending a Sunday School, and it was continued at the LMS seminary at Gosport, to which he went after he had decided to become a missionary. His vocation for teaching was obvious long before he reached Bengal, as he proved himself a successful teacher in schools both in England and in the USA, where he spent a year on his way to India.[149] At Chinsura from 1814 to 1818 he devoted himself single-mindedly to the management of schools, to a greater extent than any other missionary. Thomason described him as "a little active man . . . never so happy as when he is teaching children and managing schools, in all ye. details of which (sic) he has a peculiar facility, and a practical wisdom which few possess. He seems admirably qualified for such an undertaking."[150] The fundamental reason for May's success was perhaps his attitude to the children themselves; he urged one of his assistants to "cultivate a love to the young: the more you love the children, the more you will strive to do them good". The boys were "quick, teachable, and desirous of instruction . . . consider them as worthy of all your care, labour and attention"[151] and coming from May, these were not merely pious platitudes, but an accurate indication of his own attitude to the job. There is an instructive contrast between May and Pearson, who wished to devote more of his time to direct Christian evangelism, and reorganised the schools according to Bell's system partly in the hope that they would be able to carry on with less need of detailed and time-consuming supervision by himself. On paper the reform looked good, but by 1824 criticisms were being made both by his colleague Mundy and by officials of the General Committee of Public Instruction to the effect that the schools were deteriorating.[152]

Marshman had certain things in common with May, including a vocation for teaching, humble origins, and a scanty formal education. He was born in 1768, learnt his "3Rs" at the village school, and beyond that was largely self-educated, though he was allowed to attend the Baptist academy at Bristol as a part-time student. From 1794 to 1799 he was the master of a Baptist elementary school at Bristol, and at the same time gave a more advanced education to some private pupils. His son wrote subsequently that his "private seminary rose rapidly in

public estimation, and placed him . . . in circumstances of independence".[153] His work in Bristol, both at an elementary and at a higher level, thus served as a preparation for his wide and varied educational achievement in Bengal. Compared with May, he was a man of greater imagination and wider vision which was reflected in his more ambitious curriculum and in the much larger number of the Serampore schools. But the fact that Marshman had about 100 schools to manage made it much less easy for him to give personal attention to each one, and he, therefore, put more emphasis than May on the importance of perfecting the machinery of administration. Everything was increasingly centralised on Serampore, from where Marshman tried to regulate the schools through the agency of superintendents, teachers, monitors and above all textbooks, as a consequence of which his schools were in danger of becoming merely "units in an educational network devised with Benthamite precision".[154] It would seem that May and Marshman both stood for something essential: Marshman had the ability to devise—or rather, to adapt—a system to implement his vision, and without a system there could obviously be no effective large-scale educational programme; while May realised that even the best system would be barren and unfruitful unless the men who worked it kept in close contact with the people whom it was supposed to benefit.

Thomas Thomason was born in 1774; his father died when he was a year old, leaving the family in difficult circumstances. Nevertheless he was able to go through all the stages of a formal education, ending with a distinguished career at Cambridge, where he became a Fellow and Assistant Tutor of Queen's College in 1797.[155] In Bengal, his comprehensive schemes for education at all levels were only equalled by the Serampore missionaries, and he showed more awareness than them of the importance of English—at the same time avoiding the mistake made subsequently of giving too little attention to the vernacular. He was a man of broad and generous outlook, always ready to give an enthusiastic welcome to every sign of the advancement of learning, as he showed, for example, by his support for the Hindu College in its early years.[156]

The missionaries' basic motive and purpose in providing education is a more complex question that might at first appear. On the one hand they certainly viewed education as a means to an evangelistic end; they were not at this period seriously expecting conversions of the children in their schools, but they did believe that the education that they gave, even if it contained little or no direct Christian teaching, would dispose them to give a favourable hearing to Christian preaching and tracts subsequently. On the other hand such men as May, Marshman and Thomason undoubtedly had a genuine vocation as teachers quite apart from their missionary purpose; to provide the conditions for children to develop into responsible thinking men seemed to them to be of real value in itself. In other words, their motives were humanitarian as well as religious—or more precisely, that their religion included and expressed itself partly in humanitarianism. And this was far from being just a gimmick with which to advertise

their religion ; rather was their religion a kind of transcended humanitarianism. But whatever their motives, there can be little doubt that during Hastings' administration they made a major contribution to education in Bengal, whether through their own societies or by cooperation with Government and the Calcutta School and School Book Societies.[157]

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The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and its Influence on Legislation in other Provinces

The Politics and Economics of Tenancy Protection

Modern economists may wonder why land reforms and agrarian legislation in South Asia are primarily political and seem to neglect economic considerations like productivity.[1] These economists forget the colonial heritage of agrarian legislation which provides the foundation for all legislative efforts even after independence. The colonial rulers did not legislate in the interest of economic planning but in order to forestall political unrest. They had to keep an even balance of different interest groups so as to protect the social base of colonial rule. Of course, they usually did not reveal these motives and preferred to think in terms of social justice. They also had ambivalent feelings about legislative interference, because the doctrines of political economy which they had absorbed made them reluctant to tamper with economic forces. These doctrines, which had been evolved in the context of the economic development of England were incompatible with tenancy protection, rent control, and the like, which could only distort but not reverse the course of economic development. Those who wanted to change the course of events by legislative interference, so the economist thought, might just as well try to legislate against the law of gravity.

The Irish experience had led the representatives of political economy to second thoughts about their doctrines. But even then they found it very difficult to derive concepts from these second thoughts which could stand the test of the first principles that they defended. John Stuart Mill who did not hesitate to advocate tenancy protection and rent control in Ireland had a hard time trying to convince his contemporaries of the soundness of these propositions.[2] Faced with the Irish and the Indian challenge the British economists infused a dose of relativism into their teachings and readily agreed that what was true for England was not necessarily true for other countries, but they did not go on to reconstruct political economy on a more universal foundation. Those who had to deal with Irish and Indian problems could invoke this relativism but they did not find any guidance in a new economic theory. The result of this was a kind of political economy which was more political than economy. Administrators who were left in the lurch by the economists had to justify their political decisions with some eclectic economic thought of their own. But this was not always a case of simply finding some convenient reasons for a predetermined course of action. Very often the administrators were really at a loss as to what to do and tried to derive from their understanding

of political economy some suggestions for legislative action. No wonder that the result was a hybrid of expediency and dogmatism.

In the absence of a new theory which could have taken account of different economies such as India's and Ireland's the resort to custom became very important. If people did not behave in accordance with the laws of political economy they obviously did so because their customs were different and, therefore, all these customs should be either destroyed or respected. Political prudence recommended that they should be respected. But custom proved to be a most illusive phenomenon. For the purposes of legislation some definite features of customary relations had to be isolated from the universe of custom. The very fact of isolation, however, proved to be fatal to the customary relation. The dimension of custom when added to political expediency and economic dogmatism made confusion worse confounded.

The pattern of legislation which developed in this way following the method of trial and error showed an unusually high rate of error, because as soon as some custom was singled out as a mainstay of legislative action it broke down under the weight of this undue attention. After such frustrating experiences the legislators slowly gave up their adherence to custom ; in their attempts at finding a way out of the dilemma they had basically three alternatives: they could entrust the protection of all interests to executive action, they could emphasize judicial control, or they could enact more or less arbitrary provisions which placed a check on eviction and the raising of rents. In due course, most legislative efforts showed a combination of all these three features. Custom and economic dogmatism receded and plain expediency prevailed. The ambition to settle the matter for all time to come faded away and legislators were ready to admit that their measures were only of a temporary nature.

The conflict between custom and political economy or, in the words of Henry Maine, between status and contract, intrigued the minds of British administrators but they never resolved the puzzle which this conflict posed to them. They were aware of the numerous problems which beset the relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland and India but they continued to talk in terms of competition, prices, and the market. On the other hand they were unwilling and unable to push their ideas to their logical conclusion and to upset the existing relationships. When the Indian economist, M. G. Ranade, suggested that it would be better to create substantial peasant proprietors and to compensate the landlords rather than to protect the tenants he could not hope that the official mind would respond to such suggestions.[3] The administration was bound to a policy of tenancy protection without having worked out the economics of it. Even a measure which led to a stalemate between landlords and tenants was satisfactory as far as the administration was concerned because in the last resort the administration was neither interested in the landlords nor in the tenants, nor for that matter in the economics of agricultural productivity, but only in its own political fortune.

Irish Lessons

Before the great spurt of tenancy legislation in India at the end of the 19th century there had been several experiments in Ireland and, therefore, Irish precedent had a great impact on India. The Irish question had troubled Britain for a long time and as the British parliament had to legislate for Ireland, Irish affairs were much more in the limelight than Indian problems could ever hope to be. The first valiant effort to solve the Irish tenancy problem was made by Gladstone in 1870. However, the tenancy act of that year was almost a model of mistakes which should be avoided in tenancy legislation. Its only merit was that it provided a point of departure and that it made it perfectly clear that the matter could not rest there. The act provided in addition to a compensation for improvements also a compensation for disturbance which the landlord had to pay to the tenant if he wanted to evict him. In the original draft the tenant was entitled to this compensation even if he was in arrears with the payment of his rent, but the House of Lords had deleted this clause and, therefore, the landlords could get rid of their tenants with impunity as soon as they failed to pay the rent in a bad year. The act also codified the Ulster custom according to which the tenant could not be deprived of his occupancy right as long as he paid his rent. However, as the act did not contain any restrictions on the raising of rents the provision about the Ulster custom proved to be worthless. In fact, the combination of a compensation for disturbance with the Ulster custom forced the landlords to raise the rents, because the lower the rent, the higher was the value of the tenant right and accordingly the compensation which they had to pay for it. The working of the act showed clearly that all indirect measures of tenancy protection are useless if one does not define the occupancy right and puts no restrictions on the raising of rents. When Gladstone's government placed another tenancy act on the statute book in 1881 these mistakes were amended and the tenant got the famous "Three Fs" (Fixity of Tenure, Fair Rent, and Free Transfer). These three Fs were interdependent, because fixity of tenure had no value without a fair rent and only the freedom of sale guaranteed the tenant an adequate compensation for his improvements. According to the act the tenant had three alternatives, if his landlord wanted to raise the rent: He could pay the new rent which could then not be raised for fifteen years, he could refuse and would then get a compensation for disturbance or he could apply to a commission established under the act for a judicial settlement of his rent. This third course was only conceived of as an exception but against all expectations it soon turned out to be the rule. The guiding principle for the judicial settlement of rents was to be, that an increase in the value of the soil or of the produce should not only accrue to the landlord but should be divided equitably between the landlord and the tenant. This was in fact a recognition of co-ownership which had so far been denied under English common law.[4]

The Evolution of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885

When the Irish act was passed in 1881, the discussions on a new Bengal Tenancy Bill were already in full swing. Tht Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859 had many drawbacks which were similar to those of the Irish act of 1870. The occupancy right as defined in that act in terms of a prescriptive right of the tenant after twelve years of holding the particular piece of land could be easily violated by the landlord by shifting the tenant from one plot to another. Furthermore, a High Court decision of 1862 had made this occupancy right worthless by declaring that the landlord could ask for the full market value of the rent, which in fact meant that there were no restrictions on rent enhancement. A reversal of this ruling by a High Court decision of 1865, which established that the rent could only be enhanced in proportion to the previous rent and the increased value of the produce, did not solve the problem either, because landlord and tenant would never agree on the period and on tht data which should serve as a base for these proportional calculations. The actual settlement of rents was never governed by such rational considerations. It was a matter of bargaining between a landlord who often did not know how much land his tenant held and what he cultivated and who tried to collect as much rent and illegal exactions as the tenant could be made to pay, and a tenant who preferred to keep his landlord in the dark about his affairs and tried to pay as little as he could get away with. No revenue officer disturbed this rural harmony because under the permanent settlement only the foremost landlords were in contact with the revenue authorities.

This peace was rudely disturbed by Sir George Campbell who imposed a road cess on Bengal in 1872 which was to be collected by the landlords from their tenants on the basis of the existing rent rolls. The cess was a minor matter but the attention which the government now paid to the rent rolls was very disturbing. Many landlords tried to enhance and consolidate the rent charges before they would come under government scrutiny. This brought them into conflict with their tenants. In the district of Pabna the tenants refused to pay their rent and there was violent unrest. Campbell who felt that the landlords had deserved this did not interfere. He also turned a deaf ear to the demands for a revision of the existing tenancy law because he knew that they were made by the landlords who wanted a rent recovery act rather than a tenancy act.[5] His succcssor Sir Richard Temple was more amenable to these demands. He turned his attention first to the procedural side of the question as he had to deal with the proposal of the Government of India which wanted to entrust a judicial commission with a speedy trial of all rent cases. Temple was sceptical about judicial decisions in these matters and wanted these cases to be retransferred to the executive even more so because they had only been transferred from the revenue officers to the courts in 1869. In discussing this point with the Government of

India Temple had to deal with the substantive law of landlord and tenant, too. Here he suggested a formula according to which tenants with occupancy right should pay 25% less of rent than those tenants who did not have such a right. Finally he recommended that tenants without occupancy right should pay 20% of the value of the gross produce as rent and tenants with occupancy right accordingly only 15% of this value.[6] At this stage of the debate Temple was transferred from Bengal to Bombay, but the gross produce rule which he had sponsored was bound to come up again and again in future discussions.

After these preliminary debates a more comprehensive proposal was made by the Rent Law Commission which submitted its report in 1880. If the landlords had hoped to have their hands strengthened by the government they were now sorely disappointed. The commission did not concentrate its attention on the problem of rent recovery, it rather tried to deal with the problem of tenancy protection. Due to the many grades of subinfeudation in Bengal it was a difficult problem to decide where tenancy protection should begin and where it should stop. The commission proposed to solve this problem by making a basic distinction between large tenants called tenure holders who had more than hundred bighas of land and normal tenants with an occupancy right which would accrue to them after only three years of holding their plot. This distinction was made so that subtenants of large tenants should also be in a position to acquire an occupancy right. However, the commission subsequently decided to protect this latter class of tenants by the provision of a compensation for disturbance rather than by an occupancy right. Subletting was to be discouraged by fixing a maximal rent rate so that a tenant would have no profit if he let his land to another. The landlord was to be deprived of the power of distraint for arrears of rent, instead of this the commission recommended a summary procedure for rent cases.[7]

The resistance of the landlords caused the government of Bengal to modify their proposals. Sir Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, submitted a new bill which proved to be a half way house between the suggestions of the Rent Law Commission and the act which was placed on the statute book some years later. Eden dealt with the matter like a chess player who takes over someone else's game, trying to make the best out of it by boldly following up the last moves of his predecessor. He gave up the two classes of tenants as well as all prescriptive rights, proposed to make all tenants occupancy tenants and to give them the right of free sale of their holdings; this he thought would also enable the landlords to recover arrears of rent by compulsory sale. Then he staked everything on the provision for a maximal rent rate which had emerged as a main feature from the deliberations of the Rent Law Commission. These maximal rent rates were to be settled by revenue officers who would publish periodically a table of rates which would be binding for their district. This, Eden thought, would also have the advantage of flexibility because the preparation of tables of rates could first be limited to those districts where this proved to be necessary.

Eden's method would have been an equivalent of the simultaneous settlement of rent and revenue in Northern India, with the exception that in Bengal only the rents were to be settled. But this exception made a difference: In Northern India the revenue officer based his settlement on a measurement of the fields, an estimate of the crops, and a classification of the soil, but Eden did not mention how, in the absence of revenue settlements, his officers were supposed to get the data for their tables of rates.[8]

The point of departure for Eden's suggestions can be found in Justice Field's contributions to the debates of the Rent Law Commission. Field presented a revised version of Ricardo's rent theory. He eliminated all assumptions about wages and capital from Ricardo's theory as they were irrelevant to Indian peasant agriculture. He only insisted on Ricardo's basic proposition that rent does not influence prices, but prices do influence rent. On this premise he based the recommendation to link rent enhancement directly with the increase in prices. The way in which the two were to be linked, however, could neither be left to custom nor to competition but would have to be determined by the state. Accordingly, rent was to be the proportion of the gross produce that the government would grant to the landlord after officially ascertaining the movement of prices.[9]

Eden's suggestions, to give all tenants an occupancy right and to settle all rent questions by a table of rates, were bound to lead to an even more radical attempt at a solution of the tenancy problem. If the tenants should all have an occupancy right, why not declare that such a right should be attached to all land at present occupied by tenants? And if the revenue officers are supposed to prepare tables of rates why not authorize them to make a regular rent settlement on the North Indian pattern? This was the line of argument which was pursued by the Government of India and the Viceroy, Lord Ripon. The Government of India recommended that the land occupied by tenants should be clearly delimited and separated from the land which was under the direct management of the landlord, and the occupancy right should then not be vested in the tenant but should be attached to all the land which the landlord had let. In this way there was no need for prescriptive rights or compensation for disturbance or any other measures of tenancy protection. This proposal was rejected by the Secretary of State who held that it was not in accordance with Indian custom. Eden himself, who had now become a member of the Secretary of State's Council was also against these bold new suggestions which had been derived from his proposals. Henry Maine, also a member of the council, who was greatly in favour of prescriptive rights did not like these suggestions either. Ripon replied that the prevailing twelve years rule for the acquisition of an occupancy right had equally no basis in Indian tradition, but he preferred not to pursue his suggestions against the will of the Secretary of State.[10]

The landlords of Bengal could only welcome this defeat of the Government of India at the hands of the Secretary of State, because they would have found

it very difficult to draw a line between the land under their own management and that which they had let to the tenants. Unlike in Northern India where the land under the direct management of the landlord was demarcated for the purposes of a more favourable revenue assessment, there was no such distinction in Bengal, where due to the permanent settlement such differentiations had long since been forgotten. Most landlords had let all their land to tenants, many of whom had acquired an occupancy right, and it would have been very embarassing for them if this right which was vested in the tenant were to be projected on to the land.[11] But the government did not completely withdraw this idea of the projection of the occupancy right even after the rebuff from the Secretary of State. The next draft contained a provision whereby a landlord could buy out an occupancy tenant but as soon as he let the land again, he had to concede the occupancy right to the new tenant. In this way a latent occupancy right was attached to the land which would be revived whenever the landlord let the land. The new tenant would thus enjoy the prescriptive rights which had accrued to his predecessor.

The bill which was introduced into the legislative council by Courteney Ilbert in 1883 showed the traces of many previous proposals and debates. The prescriptive rights of twelve years occupation remained a major feature of the bill, they had been strengthened by the provision that they would accrue to a tenant not only due to the holding of one particular plot but even after holding several plots under the same landlord. The idea of a latent occupancy right had also found its way into the bill. The maximal rent rate and the table of rates as suggested by Eden had been included. Here the Government of India had added a paragraph which empowered a revenue officer to prepare a complete rent settlement for the estate of a landlord. This addition which fitted in very well with Eden's suggestions was to be of great consequence, because it was the point of departure for a major revision of the bill which finally found its expression in the famous Chapter X of the Bengal Tenancy Act.[12]

A few months after the introduction of the bill the Government of Bengal was shocked to find out that the mainstay of their proposals, the table of rates, would prove to be utterly useless. After years of deliberation about the table of rates the government had finally decided to conduct some experiments which had shown that in many villages rent rates for the same type of land differed widely, so that there was no basis for any reasonable table of rates. There was also evidence that in many instances prices had risen so fast that a proportional rent enhancement would be impossible.[13] After these findings had knocked out one pillar of the Government of Bengal's edifice, the Secretary of State knocked out another by objecting to the latent occupancy right.[14] The committee of the legislative council which revised the bill accordingly gave up the latent occupancy right and separated all the provisions about the table of rates from the main body of the bill, relegating them to a special chapter which was soon to be dropped in the next stage of deliberations. As the table of rates receded into the background

the provisions about a maximal rent rate lost their importance and the committee struck them off. But now the problem of subletting had to be faced once more. This the committee tried to solve by framing a new provision whereby any tenant who sublet more than half of his holding would become a tenure holder so that his subtenant could also acquire an occupancy right. Then the committee went one step further and protected even those tenants who had no occupancy right. They could apply to a court in order to obtain a judicial lease and a judicial settlement of their rent. The provisions about the settlement of rents by a revenue officer and a preparation of a record of rights were now amplified and put together in Chapter X against which the table of rates in Chapter XI paled into insignificance.

It would have been in keeping with previous developments if the committee had now re-introduced a provision which would have defined rent in terms of a proportion of the gross produce, because ever since the High Court decision of 1865 and the plans of Sir Richard Temple such rules had figured prominently in the different proposals for tenancy protection until the more comprehensive project of table of rates had displaced them. With the fading away of the table of rates a resurrection of these rules was to be expected, but the committee did not take this step. Perhaps this would have happened if the committee had decided at that time to drop the table of rates entirely. However, the table of rates still had a place in the bill, and the committee explicitly rejected the idea of a gross produce rule.

Finally, two methods of dealing with the rent question, both of which circumvented the crucial problem of finding a common denominator for diverse rent rates, emerged as the most prominent features of the bill: The first method was that of a simple and arbitrary restriction on rent enhancement whereby the same percentage would apply to high and low rents and the second method was that of a specific rent settlement by a revenue officer under the provisions of Chapter X.[15] All questions of custom or economics were excluded thereby, the interference had dropped all pretensions. However, this was not the result of a predetermined course of action, it was rather due to a process of elimination. All those who tried their hand at the various bills were in this respect more or less innocent participants in a very complicated game. This was amply demonstrated by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Rivers Thompson, who greatly deplored the arbitrary nature of the bill and set out at this late stage of the development to infuse some new lifeblood into the bill which had been drained out of it so thoroughly in the course of its long career.

Rivers Thompson quoted the latest writings of the British economists, criticized Ricardo's rent theory and even went so far as to assert that under the conditions prevailing in Bengal rent did affect the cost of production. He recommended a revival of the gross produce rule and thought the tenant should get at least half of the increase in the price of the produce. He wanted to combine the gross

produce rule with the table of rates, he was also unhappy about the neglect of the tenants without an occupancy right and wanted to restore the compensation for disturbance.[16] However, none of these suggestions were accepted and thus the Government of India had to pass an act which had matured under four successive Lieutenant Governors of Bengal in the teeth of opposition of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The committee which prepared the final draft eliminated the table of rates but also rejected the proposal of a gross produce rule. It fixed the percentage of permissible rent enhancement at 12½% (Two annas in the rupee) for 15 years, a provision which was very similar to that of the Irish act.[17]

The years which followed the passing of the act were good years for Indian agriculture. There was no flood of litigation and general unrest as predicted by the critics of the act.[18] The act soon acquired the reputation of a model of statesmanship and moderation and was therefore warmly recommended to other provinces where similar problems had to be solved.

A Study in Contrasts: Tenancy legislation in the Central Provinces.

It so happened that Anthony Macdonell, who as Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal was one of the main architects of the Bengal Tenancy Act, was sometime later appointed Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, and immediately set out to criticise the tenancy law of that province in the light of his experience in Bengal. For this he had good reasons, because even at the time of the passing of the Central Provinces' Tenancy Act of 1883 the Secretary of State was astounded by the fact that the Government of India had obviously no concern for the patent contradictions which were embodied in the principles of this act and in those of the Bengal Tenancy Bill which was sent to him at the same time.[19] This was even more remarkable as both bills had the same point of departure, the Tenancy Act of 1859, which had been introduced in the Central Provinces in 1864. But as it often happened, the provincial governments had proceeded along their different ways undaunted by the criticism of the Government of India or of the Secretary of State.

The Central Provinces as the youngest province of British India had had a very peculiar fate. Bordering on provinces with revenue settlements as different as those of Bengal and Bombay and settled originally under the influence of the pro-landlord tendency which prevailed in the years after the mutiny of 1857, this province was really at the crossroads of different trends in British Indian policy. The government soon regretted that it had bestowed so many privileges on landlords in the course of the first settlement of the province and began after 1875 to work on a new revenue act as well as on tenancy legislation. In looking for some guiding principles of tenancy protection the provincial government decided to adopt the Irish precedent of compensation for improvements and compensation for disturbance. There was also a provision in the government's bill

that the tenants could buy the occupancy right from their landlords, but the twelve years rule of the old Act of 1859 was given up. In this way prescriptive rights were eliminated from the new act. However, those tenants who had acquired an occupancy right under the twelve years rule as long as it was in operation were confirmed in their rights by the act.

On account of these different provisions there were now four classes of tenants in the Central Provinces: the so-called absolute occupancy tenants who had had an occupancy right even before the introduction of the twelve years rule, secondly those tenants who had acquired their occupancy right under the twelve years rule, thirdly normal tenants who could now no longer acquire the right of occupancy but were protected by the provisions about compensation for disturbance and, finally, the tenants at will who were unprotected. The compensation for disturbance was fixed at seven times the enhanced rent demanded by the landlord. The officials in the India Office in London were not very happy with these proposals and regretted especially the abolition of prescriptive rights. The provincial government, however, were very proud of adopting the device of compensation for disturbance and considered it to be a most universal means of tenancy protection. They pointed out that it would almost completely eliminate competition and thus protect the tenants more effectively than any occupancy right. Compensation for disturbance would also be independent of judicial decisions as it could be clearly defined once and for all.[20]

Some time after the act had been placed on the statute book the provincial government found some flaws in their legislation They regretted that they had given up prescriptive rights altogether. They also noted that there was no provision in the act which prevented landlords from buying out occupancy tenants. On the other hand they realized that their provisions about compensation for disturbance were a bar even to reasonable rent enhancements and this was not intended as the right of the landlord to enhance the rent had been explicitly confirmed in the act. Seen from this point of view the Bengal Tenancy Act had much to recommend itself to the Government of the Central Provinces and when Macdonell appeared on the scene his message was well received. He pointed out that the compensation for disturbance was an exotic provision and made no sense in an Indian context. He recommended a judicial decision of rent cases and a re-introduction of prescriptive rights. The new Central Provinces Tenancy Act of 1895 showed the impact of these suggestions.[21]

A Tangled Skein : The Bengal Precedent in Madras.

There was hardly a province in British India which was so different from Bengal and its administrative traditions as Madras. It was here that the *ryotwari* settlement was first set up against the permanent settlement of Bengal. The official mind in Madras was conditioned by the *ryotwari* approach and, therefore,

tenancy legislation was a very strange subject to Madras administrators. However, there were large remnants of permanently settled areas in the Madras Presidency and the Madras Government could not avoid dealing with their problems. In doing so this government had to take into account the Bengal precedent, but this precedent was destined to play a rather unfortunate role in the history of tenancy legislation in Madras. It thoroughly confused the official mind, set different parties in the government against each other and delayed legislation for decades.

The first impact of the Bengal precedent, however, was short, decisive and abortive. This was the impact it had on the proposed tenancy legislation for the district of Malabar. In Malabar under British rule all agrarian relations had become utterly perverse. The land was held by landlords, called jenmis, who according to the British revenue settlement were *ryots* as Malabar happened to be a *ryotwari* area. These *jenmis* had tenants called *kanamkars* who usually paid their rent in advance and, therefore, were looked upon as mortgagees by the British courts. These tenants had again subtenants, called *verumpattamdars* who actually cultivated the land. The pattern of landholding and the superimposed system of revenue settlement produced the strange paradox that the landlord could be thought of as an indebted *ryot* who had mortgaged his land to a moneylender, the kanamkar, who got it cultivated by his labourers. However, if one looked at it differently, the kanamkar could be considered as a tenant who should enjoy the benefits of tenancy protection. And this is just how the *kanamkars* preferred to look at themselves. Seeing the signs of the time they were quick in mobilizing official opinion in their favour and lengthy reports were prepared in order to introduce a tenancy bill for Malabar.[22]

Unfortunately for the kanamkars, Sir Charles Turner, the Chief Justice of Madras, took the side of the *jenmis* and defended their rights as landlords. But the most unkind turn that he did to the kanamkars was that he finally suggested the Bengal Tenancy Act as an appropriate model for Malabar. In doing so, he conceived of the kanamkars as tenureholders and recommended that the *verumpattamdars* should enjoy the protection which the Bengal Act granted to the occupancy tenants. No wonder that the *kanamkars* soon lost their interest in tenancy legislation.[23]

The Bengal Tenancy Act had a more lasting impact on the legislative efforts which finally led to the Madras Landed Estates Act of 1908. This piece of legislation was on the anvil for more than thirty years. The first cause had been, as it happened so often with British-Indian Legislation, an inconvenient decision of the High Court. In 1870 the High Court of Madras had declared that the landlord had an absolute right to terminate all tenancies at the end of the revenue year unless the tenant could show a written proof that he had the customary right of occupancy. The High Court held that the Madras Rent Recovery Act of 1865 did not contain adequate provisions about the termination of a tenancy. The

Board of Revenue was very much perturbed by this decision as it extinguished the occupancy right which the legislators had intended to confer upon the tenants. But in spite of this the Government of Madras did not do anything in this matter for more than a decade.

It was only when the Government of India communicated the recommendations of the Famine Comission to the Government of Madras in which it was stated that subletting should be stopped and the occupancy right strengthened that a new impetus was given to legislative action in Madras. But it was not until the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 stimulated the imagination of the Madras administration that any serious legislative efforts were made. Thus in 1887, a draft bill was prepared which combined the main features of the Rent Recovery Act of 1865 with those of the Bengal Tenancy Act. However, it became soon evident that the imitation of the Bengal precedent did more harm than good to the course of tenancy legislation in Madras. Many officers pointed that the Bengal pattern was irrelevent to the Madras situation. Finally the Board of Revenue suggested a delimitation of the land let to tenants as distinct from the land managed by the landlord and thereby repeated the proposal made by Lord Ripon for Bengal which was rejected by the Secretary of State. As far as rent restrictions were concerned, the Board of Revenue recommended the elimination of the freedom of contract from the existing law and the establishment of a record of rent rates and a record of tenancy rights. The Board also recommended that arrears of rent for more than three years should be written off, because Irish experience had shown that it was useless to guarantee the tenant a better future if he was still groaning under the debts of the past.

When this proposal of the Board of Revenue of 1892 was submitttd to the Government of Madras it became soon apparent that there were three parties in this government, those who would rather retain the old Rent Recovery Act of 1865 with minor amendments, those who wanted to follow the Bengal precedent and finally those who agreed with the Board of Revenue that neither the old law nor the Bengal pattern were suitable for Madras and that a new way ought to be found. It so happened that at the time when the draft of the Board of Revenue was placed before the Government of Madras the majority of the members belonged to that school of thought which preferred the Bengal precedent. Therefore, they rejected the draft of the Board and submitted to the Government of India a slightly revised version of the draft which followed the Bengal model. When this draft was returned by the Government of India to the Government of Madras for revision, the composition of that government had changed and some of the officers who had previously been on the Board of Revenue were now members of the government. They gladly accepted the criticism of the Government of India and thus a new round of legislative efforts could begin.[24]

The Government of Madras could not immediately go back to the original draft of the Board of Revenue, because the basis of discussions with the Government of India was now for better or worse the draft based on the Bengal

precedent. The new draft which was sent from Madras to the Government of India in 1898 presented, therefore, a hybrid mixture of all previous proposals and was bound to provoke fresh criticism.

In fact, the Government of India had criticized the earlier draft not so much because it followed the Bengal precedent but because in following it, it had missed the point in many respects. It so happened that Anthony Macdonell was the member of the Government of India who had to deal with this draft He found that the Madras provisions did not adequately protect the occupancy right of the tenant, that there was no protection for subtenants and that the essential provisions of Chapter X of the Bengal Tenancy Act were missing in the Madras draft. The revised draft which the Government of Madras sent to the Government of India in 1898 reflected to a certain extent Macdonell's suggestions. But as far as the protection of subtenants was concerned the Madras government had to reject Macdonell's recommendations because they were afraid that they would create a dangerous precedent for the *ryotwari* areas. The draft of 1898 had another serious flaw which those who had the experience of Bengal in mind quickly detected. The Madras government wanted to empower revenue officers to settle rent disputes but in doing so these officers were to act under the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code. The same mistake had been made in the Bengal Tenancy Act and had to be corrected by later amendments. The Government of India wanted to prevent the repetition of this mistake in Madras. There were many other features of the Madras proposals with which the officers of the central government were dissatisfied but they were constrained to limit their criticism because the previous draft had been considered by their predecessors and, therefore, they could not start the whole matter all over again but had to stick to the specific points of disagreement between their predecessors' proposal and the revised draft of the Government of Madras.[25]

And yet, the whole case was thrown wide open again when the bill was finally introduced into the legislative council of the Governor of Madras. The cause was not the criticism of the Government of India, but the ideas of the member of the Government of Madras who was in charge of the bill, when it was submitted to the council. The new draft which emerged from these deliberations looked very much like the one prepared by the Board of Revenue in 1892. It embodied the views of those who thought that it would be best to extend as far as possible the principles of the *ryotwari* settlement to the permanently settled tracts. But as it was impossible to revoke the permanent settlement with the landlords, the best solution of the problem seemed to be to introduce a permanent settlement for their tenants, too. This settlement was to be based either on customary rates of rent or, where these could not be ascertained, on the rates paid in 1801. This amazing bill shocked the Government of India when it was submitted to them in 1903. They were very much surprised to see that the Government of Madras which had so far most strongly insisted on the principle

of freedom of contract now recommended customary rates or harking back to 1801.[26]

When the Madras legislators were faced with the rejection of their Permanent settlement for tenants they finally adopted the arbitrary restrictions on rent enhancement which were the main feature of the Bengal Tenancy Act.[27] In the end the Bengal precedent had prevailed. Much work on five major draft bills and numerous preliminary proposals could have been saved if the Government of Madras had at an earlier stage simply adopted the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 for the permanently settled tracts of the Madras Presidency. The Tenancy Act of 1859 had been freely exported from Bengal to other provinces, though not to Madras, but in the mean time tenancy legislation had become highly complicated and had to be geared to the specific problems of the province concerned. Nevertheless, the precedent of the Bengal Tenancy Act which was perhaps the most elaborate Tenancy Act ever placed on the statute book had to be taken into account by everybody who set out to draft tenancy legislation after 1885.

Protection for whom?

The instruments of tenancy protection with which the government had armed itself were of a limited scope and they did not reach much beyond the first tier of tenants. This restraint was deemed to be reasonable, because there should be tenants-at-will as pawns in the game of competition in which the official mind sincerely believed. There was the additional reason that the *ryotwari*-system should not be upset. Of course, according to the text-book of the economists the ryot as government-tenant was not supposed to have sub-tenants and the whole system of revenue-settlements was based on this assumption. If the theory did no longer fit the facts, it was in the interest of sound administration not to reveal this inadvertently by hasty legislative efforts.

Politically this limited protection suited the government very well. The colonial rulers had come to realize that the landlords provided an insufficient social base for their government, but in their quest for a broader base they were quite satisfied when they reached the level of substantial tenants on whom they could confer the boon of statutory or occupancy rights thus stabilizing the position of an important social group. In this way the social conditions of Indian politics in the twentieth century were pre-determined to a great extent by British-Indian tenancy legislation in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

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The Conflict within the Bengal Renaissance

I

In the jubilee number of a journal devoted to the history of Bengal, a writer may perhaps crave indulgence for a broad yet concise review of an important aspect in our development, with some freedom for interpretative generalisation. I am taking this opportunity therefore of presenting before the academic audience certain tentative conclusions and reflections which I advanced in a Bengali essay on the occasion of the Tagore Centenary (English version in *Enquiry*, No. 5. 1961), elaborated further in two subsequent articles in the Bengali periodical *'Parichay'*.

In a brief contribution of this nature, proper documentation is ruled out for lack of space. I can assure the reader, however, that my comments are based on a long study of the original writings of the protagonists of the 'awakening' in 19th century Bengal.

The 'renaissance' in Bengal lacked the tremendous sweep and vital energy of the many-sided upsurge in the midst of which was shaped its European prototype. Our movement had to function within the strait-jacket of a foreign semicolonial regime. It did not have the advantage of springing originally from the rediscovery of a life-giving old culture. Rather it had to lean heavily in its first manifestations on an alien conquering world.

Yet the Bengal Renaissance has certainly its own specific relative value. Historians are now acutely conscious of the serious limitations of the renaissance in Europe itself; the old halo has largely faded. Our 'pre-renaissance' society, again, was undoubtedly depressing; a recovery from the stupor has its own merit.

The guide-line for a proper assessment of what happened in the cultural life of 19th century Bengal must then steer between uncritical adulation and scornful rejection. A historical appreciation of the 'new life' in Bengal is possible, even after recognising its obvious weaknesses: it did move on the axis of the upper stratum alone of society, the 'bhadraloks'; it could not draw in the Muslim community and the masses of the backward Hindus; it failed to strike a consistent anti-imperialist note, in sharp contrast to the role of the intellectuals in the Russia of the same period.

II

The purpose of this essay is not a general estimate of the movement but the attempt at an outline analysis of the deep cleavage within it, the persisting conflict

between different trends, different sets of ideals and values which moved our 19th century forefathers.

In a sense, of course, one cannot but notice the remarkable general awakening of the educated community, flowing into so many channels. It is usual to regard the contributions of gifted individuals as complementary to each other, to trace the manifestation of an intellectual upsurge in what is considered as a heroic age. Diversities seem to merge in a broad unified stream; each flower in the garland is our pride. Aesthetic achievement and patriotic political consciousness are the two best expressions of this unity in the movement.

A deeper view reveals, however, the not unnatural contradictions of opposed points of view, of conflicts in real life. Controversies arose; men were excited and disturbed; they often lashed out at each other; contemporaries had to judge and choose between rival trends. The historian also cannot avoid the task of assessing the implications of the clashing approaches in the light of the future development of our people. What appears at first sight as a unified stream breaks up into eddying cross currents.

In this conflict, we may discern two main trends, because of the persistence and constant reappearance of their intrinsic elements. I have used two convenient, though perhaps inexact, labels—Westernism (modernism, liberalism) and Orientalism (traditionalism, conservatism)—to distinguish the two conflicting trends. The terms obviously are drawn from the Russian analogy, from the historic 19th century fight between the Westerners and the Slavophils, depicted, for example, in Masaryk's *Spirit of Russia.*

III

It is easy to misunderstand the two terms I have used. Technically, Westernism does not mean a blind copying of Europe, just as Orientalism in our sense does not imply the aim at an impossible reversion to the past without any change. After all, the Russian Westerners and Slavophils alike thought of the future, to be shaped by different ideals though. Both again thought in terms of their own people, only their visions were different.

In distinguishing between two historic ideals, unessential unrepresentative aberrations have to be discarded. Our Westernism may properly be called so, because historically its impulse did come from the appreciation of certain European values reaching out largely through English education. Orientalism is a reaction against such foreign values which were thought inapplicable here. Westernism must not, therefore, be equated with wild living, dissolute habits, intemperance; very many of its exponents were free from such evils. Madhusudan pilloried the vices imbibed from a foreign culture, and Vidyasagar resolutely stuck to the Indian mode of life, though both were intellectually modernist. Westernism has no intrinsic connection also with the wide-spread common belief in the 'god-given'

role of England in India. Again, Orientalism is not the same thing as the social persecution of the unorthodox which was common enough in our social life. Orientalism technically is not the equivalent of the crude occasional 'revivalism', obscurantist assertions, for example, of alleged Hindu anticipations of recent science. Orientalism is not identical with the simple life of India—the 'Anglicised' ostentatious set is often enough intellectually traditionalist. In using specific technical terms, one must think of the essential connotation, not subsidiary deviations from the logical norm.

It must also be remembered that we are not facing here two sharply-demarcated clear-cut rival camps into one or other of which an individual can be neatly fitted in. Rather than two permanent groups, we have to think in terms of two abstract types of thinking—two rival logical concepts battling over the minds of men, who in concrete situations often wavered and swayed from pole to pole.

Complications naturally enough meet us at every turn. People do not always carry principles to their logical perfection. Rammohun disliked caste rules but would not renounce them publicly for fear of cutting himself adrift from the main current of his times; even the later Brahmo liberation of women stopped halfway as it were. The two trends might be reflected in the same person in different periods of their lives. Keshabchandra's early radicalism was followed by the later mystic conservatism; Tagore was a militant traditionalist in the Swadeshi days, but both before and after this epoch, from 1886 to 1898 roughly, and again ever since 1907 what dominated his social outlook was undoubtedly liberal modernist Westernism. Within the same period even, one might combine logically different approaches into some kind of composite unity for oneself. Debendranath might link up radical monotheism with a good deal of social orthodoxy, on the issue of civil marriage, for instance; Bankimchandra freely used the rationalism and positivism of the West in defence of a basically traditional loyalty. Such complexities in real life, however, cannot eliminate the abstract logical distinction between the two main outlooks in 19th century Bengal.

IV

The first expression of liberal Westernism was the passion for social reform, the attack on traditional practices and institutions which now loomed as blind, irrational, and unjust: 'sati', ban on widow-marriage, polygamy, child-marriage, depressed status of women, caste-restrictions. The main goal was the relative liberation of women and a relaxation of rigid social rules. Without a sustained reform movement, injustice would be prolonged, our conscience deadened, the national dignity lowered. The social readjustment which attracted our liberal reformers was of course of a type akin to the modernism of the West.

Social reform logically implied a second element, modern rationalism. Reformers like Rammohun or Vidyasagar quoted suitable extracts from the holy books

in justification, but their original main impulse came surely from reasoning first, the relevant selective 'sastric' passages followed next. Old customs, institutions, ideas, beliefs were brought before the bar of reason, and the standard of judgment approached once more the liberal values of the West. The new education stirred up a rational temper, as in the Derozians, a spirit of questioning and rejection of tradition.

Rationalism in history is never a quest for absolute truth but a weapon for a new-found set of values, for a revolt against old ideals. In 19th century Bengal it grew up is association with Western humanism and the concept of individual human rights. In elaborating this, Tagore once quoted the immortal line of Burns—"a man's a man for a' that." This was indeed the expression, in theory at least, of the brightest side of the bourgeois culture of the West, the degradation of which in the practice of imperialist exploitation could be considered as a betrayal of the liberal values themselves. Throughout the ages India had indeed sought after spiritual freedom, but the overwhelming practice in our society had not set much store by the secular dignity of man as man.

Oriental Traditionalism, our second trend, negatively was a rejection of the trinity of the modernist Western approach—social reform, liberal rationalism, secular humanism.

To the traditionalists, social reform did not appear to be so very urgent after all. It would gradually come of itself; there was no need for excited agitation; there might even be something to be said for age-old venerable customs. In particular, social reform by legislation was anathema, an uncalled-for interference by an alien government; other kinds of legislation by the same authority were, however, meekly accepted. It was also felt that the cry for social reform would hurt our image in foreign eyes, though the opposite perhaps was likely to be its true consequence. Secondly, Authority was held by the traditionalists to be a surer guide than anarchic self-seeking. 'Sastric' prescription and the established customs were sacrosanct on the whole, representing cherished ancestral wisdom; the reformers' quotations were arbitrary selections and misinterpretations. Thirdly, tested religious community life which holds society together had to the traditionalist a value higher far than that of individual humanistic self-seeking on a mundane level.

V

Positively, traditional Orientalism implied first the worship of past glories—a natural reaction to foreign subjection. The cry went up—in what way are we less great? European scholars themselves were revealing India's past grandeur and there was a new appreciation of the immemorial sacred writings. Disturbed minds sought a natural refuge in the 'glorious tales of old'; there was a move to reestablish self-respect.

Our glorious past appeared, however, to be predominantly Hindu, springing from a social cohesion largely unshaken by the new storm and stress. Oriental traditionalism had thus a second element—the consciousness of Hindu superiority. India's civilization was almost equated with Hindu culture and India itself seemed to be essentially Hindu in its character. The fact that the 'awakened' educated community was almost exclusively Hindu by origin lent strength to such assumptions.

The third element in our second trend was mystic emotional spiritualism, dear to our traditional religious heritage. A revival of faith was indicated as the way to our salvation, a sure buttress against the encroaching tide of alleged new-fangled materialism beating upon our precious social citadel.

It is needless to point out that the liberal Westernist attitude would be logically, if not in every case, critical of the conservative Traditionalist values—adoration of the past, Hindu superiority, emotional faith.

The Westernist appreciation of our past was bound to be selective and hence critical of our heritage; picking and choosing instead of a total acceptance would be indicated. The entire past cannot be worth worship as it contained so much which was held to be unjust and irrational. Much of the 'superior' Hindu tradition would then appear to be 'dated'; the conviction would grow that our future fabric cannot be a mere restoration, and must tower above Hindu—non-Hindu differences, must be built on the rights of man. Hindu consciousness can breed only arrogance and self-conceit. After all, a sizable portion of our people were non-Hindu, and even the Hindus themselves with their innumerable caste divisions were not homogeneous. Finally, a quiet personal religion was certainly not incompatible with liberal modernism. But institutionalised devotion with a sacred indispensable priesthood and rigid obligatory rites, flooding social life, was likely to distract attention from ardent social reform, critical rational analysis, ideals of secular human rights for individuals.

VI

A third trend is discerned by many observers, a synthesis of liberal modernism and conservative traditionalism. The seeker after synthesis finds it often in 19th century Bengal—in Rammohun, Bankimchandra, Rabindranath, Vivekananda—indeed so often that the whole thing begins to look dubious. The true synthesis is the fusion of two opposites into a third higher entity which supersedes the earlier stages of development. Where is that higher third in our renaissance, and why was synthesis so often necessary? What real synthesis is possible between abstract ideals like the fight for social reform and defence of traditional custom, secular human rights and Hindu superiority, reason and faith? One could but choose, in specific issue after issue, if not always for one's whole life.

It may be suggested that the correct concept in our case is not synthesis, but the interpenetration of opposites. This has indeed happened again and again. What we encounter in so many minds is compromise, coexistence of logically opposed ideas, ecclectic combination of diverse ideals, the clash of opposites.

In reviewing a past conflict, value-judgments cannot be avoided. The observer cannot bless both sides equally in a historic confrontation. Both trends in the renaissance in Bengal reflected objective reality and contributed to development. But one can certainly be preferred, and here the criterion must be the greater appropriateness and relevance to future progress. Of course the observer's choice is largely shaped by his own outlook, and 'bias' in such choice is always present. Many, however, remain sublimely unaware of their own bias in their crusade against 'partisanship' for 'objective truth'.

It appears to me that Westernism was the more progressive trend in 19th century Bengal. Historically, our 'awakening' itself was through the attraction of the new, "the magic touch" as Tagore once described it. The future India of the dreams of very many of us—the 'Maha-Bharat' of Tagore again—is certainly kindred to the Westernist liberal modernism. Even socialism is but the natural outcome of that. The vital thing in the concept of a Nation is not so much past memories as future aspirations.

Westernism has a greater appropriateness and relevance in the task of building up the Indian Nation, for logically it implies the rights of man as man in the secular sense; its rationalism undermines change-resisting religious and social orthodoxy; its social reform holds out the prospect of emancipation for the oppressed. Its potentiality has by no means been exhausted, and is capable of being extended to fresh fields beyond the range of the 19th century vision.

The inherent weakness of Traditionalism, from this point of view, can be detected in embryo even in our Political Extremism. This contributed to an immediate popularity, but the price had to be paid in the future. A legacy was left to hinder the building up of a new united India.

Indeed the historic conflict of the 19th century has persisted to our own days, and again and again the choice has still to be made.

Subhas Chandra Sarkar

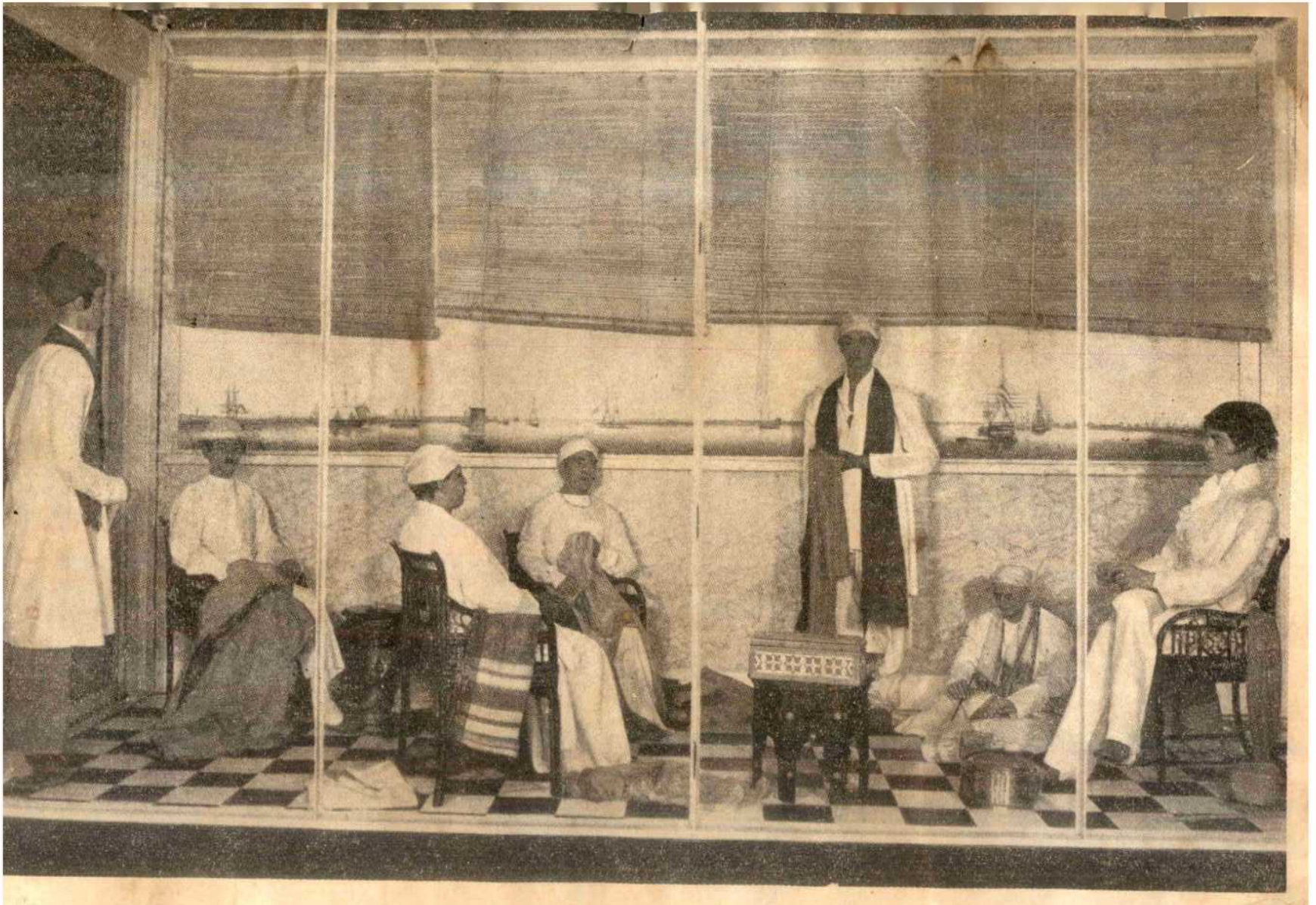
Indian Business Enterprise : Its Failure in Calcutta (1800-1848)

In the eighteenth century an atmosphere of indolent contentment prevailed in Bengal outside of the European settlements. The value system of caste ridden traditional Hindu society cannot be held responsible for this lack of a spirit of enterprise. Some very orthodox groups like the Marwaris, the Bhatias, the Chettiars, in widely separated parts of India, were not certainly lacking in enterprise in the eighteenth century. They did not, however, respond to western challenge in the first half of the nineteenth. Orthodoxy and caste could not possibly have stood in their way. When they became entrepreneurs orthodoxy still dominated their social life.

There was ceaseless pursuit of wealth by Bengali residents of Calcutta and neighbouring European settlements in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their business enterprise was largely imitative of that of the Europeans. But banking business in Bengal was not in the hands of the Bengalis. Indigenous banking which emerged from the ruins of the Jagat Seth house does not appear to have an inadequate cash nexus but capital became scattered and there was stagnation. There was no longer a single composite money market as in the days of the Jagat Seths. Indigenous banking fast degenerated into small scale business in money.

But there was money in the hands of Indian banians in Calcutta. It would be a mistake to describe the Bengali banian of this period merely as 'black gomosta', head native clerk and salesman. The eighteenth century banian has been described as "an interpreter, head book keeper, head Secretary, head broker, the supplier of cash and cash keeper." But by the end of the eighteenth century European agency houses became established in Calcutta and they were not very much inclined to depend upon the banians' supply of credit. Ex-servants of the Company and British Free Merchants were partners in this type of business. Their capital was supplied by the civil and military servants of the Company who put their very considerable savings, their prize money etc. into the agency houses, attracted by higher rates of interest and speculative profits of country trade in opium and indigo. The agency houses suffered from almost chronic shortage of capital and this financial structure was very weak on account of over speculation.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the decisive pressure of expanding British economy was felt in India. The inflow of foreign manufactures began but not the inflow of foreign capital. After the opening of India trade to private British merchants India was flooded with Manchester goods. This was known



rot Peabody Museum, Salem, Mess.)

RAMDULAL DEY AND RAJKISSEN MITTER
NEGOTIATING WITH CAPTAIN BENJAMIN SHREVE

as Consignment Trade—goods to stock, not to order. The surplus stock was shipped by merchants in Britain to agency houses to be sold on commission. So long as Chambers of Commerce did not develop the consignment system badly needed the services of banians. Though the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1834 it became moribund in 1842. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce began to function effectively only after 1853. The agency houses also expected the banians "in return for customary commissions and perquisites etc. to take charge of safety and security of goods and with all due care and diligence to keep all such goods, wares and merchandize of the firm. Goods were from time to time deposited with or entrusted to them to re-deliver when they shall be required or disposed of in like order or condition as deposited or entrusted, reasonable wear and tear excepted" (James Walker and others Vs. Rajkissore Datta 1829-30). In another case Richard Howe Cockerell and others Vs. Raghunath Gossain (1839), the role of banians during these years is fully described. Raghunath Gossain (Goswami) belonged to Serampore. He had made his money by supplying goods to the Danish East India Company and captains of Danish ships. He also sent goods brought by captains of Danish ships for sale in Calcutta. Raghunath Goswami was also banian to Palmer & Co. for some years. When Palmer & Co. became insolvent he became banian to Cockerell & Co. He deposited as security Company's paper valued at one lakh for which Cockerell & Co. promised to pay interest at the rate of 7 per cent. His duties were thus described: "A banian is a person by whom all purchases and all sales of goods, merchandize and produce are made and through whom all shipments are made on account and on behalf of the merchants or mercantile firm in whose establishment he is a banian. Such a banian is therefore responsible for the quality and quantity of the goods, merchandize, produce and shipments made through him or his Sircars or servants whom he employs. He has to make good any deficiency in weight or quality, to make compensation for any fraud in shipments of such goods or produce. The banian receives a dustoree or a percentage of the sale and produce of goods and merchandize." He was a banian of Cockerell & Co. for three years. Purchases and sales made during this period through him were valued at 2 crores. Muttyloll Seal (Matilal Sil) was for some time banian as also broker of the firm Oswald Seal & Co. and was in the habit of assisting the firm with pecuniary advances charging shroffy rate of interest of 6 p.c. and not the bazar rate of interest of 12 p.c. His account as banian was closed in November 1847 and showed a balance in his favour of Rs. 350,000 (John Storm and others of the firm of Mackillof Stuart & Co. Vs. George Oswald, Haraloll Seal, W. M. Frederick Ferguson, Henry William Abbott and Muttyloll Seal).

The banian had a thorough knowledge of British business methods. He was in a distinctly advantageous position because he could trade with his own capital. He knew market conditions, the country and its people very intimately. It was naturally to be expected that he would be a large scale inland trader. Large

capitalistic enterprises could have been organized in the sphere of inland trade. There were many petty shroffs who were at the same time traders with their headquarters in Burrabazar in Calcutta. Theirs was mean efficiency. But curiously enough, those Indian banians who had money to invest would not become large scale inland traders. In his *Report on Inland Customs and Town Duties* Trevelyan pointed out in 1834, "The profession of the merchant in the interior of the country is both unpleasant and disreputable on account of the complete state of dependence in which the most respectable people are placed on the meanest custom house officer by Secs. 19 and 23 of Reg. IX of 1810".

Bengali banians, with their large capital, left the field of inland trade to others. Out of 47 of principal cotton merchants in Burrabazar only 8 were Bengalis in the forties of the 19th century. Indigenous banking was also predominantly non-Bengali.

In these circumstances "the large capitals possessed by the natives"—words used by Lord Cornwallis—were sought to be invested to some extent in export-import trade on the British pattern but unlike the Parsis they would not go abroad. Orthodoxy was in this case a great handicap. There are many case records in the Supreme Court archives which prove that the Bengali exporters of opium to the Far East could be cheated with impunity. The most conspicuous case was that of the sons of Gopey Mohan Tagore against Barrettos. Chundercoomar Tagore and his brothers were duped and cheated in a single transaction to the extent of five lakhs. (Chunder Coomar Tagore and others vs. Edward Brighton, Luis Joseph Barretto and others, 1825). The Bengali traders could not trust their agents in Macao or Canton whose shifts, subterfuges, pretences and contrivances they could not circumvent. The middlemen as also the captains of ships engaged in this trade could not normally be depended upon. Nowhere in the records of cases in which Bengali shippers of opium were concerned do we come across such entries as we find in the case of Sapoorji Nowrajee Vs. Dadabhai Nowrajee in 1828—"At the port of China, Canton, the seat of prosperity, to the worshipful Brokerji Jahangir Korshetji." They would not go abroad. It is no wonder they could not thrive in the export import business like the Parsis.

Why were monied "natives" so much interested in export trade in opium? The arrangements made by the Company for purchase and sale made it so easy for them. A case record (Muttylall Seal Vs. the E. I. Co. 1852) best explains the state of things, "The E. I. Co. long since had and still have a monopoly of the opium manufacture and trade in this country and have been in the habit of selling opium by public sale in separate lots of five chests each and giving to the purchasers (upon payment of a certain deposit to wit Company's rupees one thousand per lot) certain printed forms of documents called "durkhusts" to be afterwards filled up and signed by the purchaser respectively which said 'durkhasts' when filled up purport to be and are transferable orders for the delivery of opium therein mentioned and are transferable by endorsement and delivery so as to

entitle the ultimate transferee to clear opium by paying the balance of purchase money due after crediting the said deposit."

But the export of opium did not engross the entire attention of Bengali businessmen. The Reporter of External Commerce of Bengal wrote in 1802: "The formerly timid Hindu now lends money at respondentia, in distant voyages, engages in speculations to various parts of the world and as an underwriter in the different insurance offices, erects indigo works in various parts of Bengal and is just as well acquainted with the principles of British laws respecting commerce as the generality of European merchants". They took advantage of the growth of American and foreign European trade. Ramdulal Dey, who began his career as a Sircar under the Fairlies, was a remarkably able man, whose ability, honesty and integrity in business dealings became proverbial. He died in 1825. His sons Asutosh Dey and Pramathanath Dey were two of the richest men in Calcutta in the second quarter of the 19th century. Ramdulal Dey's cooperation was also sought by all British agency houses. He also used to purchase large quantities of cotton piece goods, silk, cotton and indigo for and on account of various merchants and captains and supercargoes of American vessels coming to Calcutta port. A case was instituted by one of his assistants, after his death, claiming a share of the *dustoree* as he was in charge of one of the offices of Ramdulal Dey in Hannay Sahib's Kothee. He submitted, in support of his claim, a list of vessels which received supplies from Ramdulal Dey's office in Hannay Saheb's Kothee during the years 1797 to 1821.

1797— 8 vessels: cargo 19 lakhs.
1798— 4 vessels: cargo 10 lakhs.
1799— 9 vessels: cargo 13½ lakhs.
1800—11 vessels: cargo 31 lakhs.
1801— 4 vessels: cargo 10½ lakhs.
1802— 8 vessels: cargo 19 lakhs.
1803—18 vessels: cargo 39 lakhs.
1804— 8 vessels: cargo 13·65 lakhs.
1805—11 vessels: cargo 16 lakhs.
1806— 7 vessels: cargo 21 lakhs.
1807—15 vessels: cargo 51 lakhs.
1808— 1 vessel: cargo 2 lakhs.
1809— 6 vessels: cargo 23 lakhs.
1810—11 vessels: cargo 37 lakhs.
1812— 4 vessels: cargo 10½ lakhs.
1814— 3 vessels: cargo 13·80 lakhs.
1816—20 vessels: cargo 20½ lakhs.
1817— 5 vessels: cargo 11·25 lakhs.
1818— 1 vessel: cargo 2 lakhs.
1821— 1 vessel: cargo 3½ lakhs.

Bengal used to export very considerable quantities of cotton piece-goods to U.S.A., South America and Portugal and it was the declining demand for Indian goods in these markets that hit Indian cotton industry very hard. It has been argued that it could hardly be thought a satanic policy for a manufacturing nation to undersell its dependency in a neutral market. The home market of this dependency was also captured not long after. Ramdulal Dey's son Asutosh Dey continued to manage the concerns of some captains and supercargoes of American vessels which resorted to Calcutta but this business was on a much reduced scale.

The huge fortune which Ramdulal Dey left to his two sons was not affected by the agency house crisis (1829-33). But Ramdulal Dey was all along acting in very close co-operation with British businessmen. When his successors made a list of his very inconsiderable liabilities they found that they had to pay only small sums to three doctors (one of them an Englishman), ten ships' captains, Fergusson & Co., Hogue Davidson & Co, on American remittance account and on dollar account. In his will and last testament Ramdulal De appointed his two sons as also Daniel Clark, William Melville, William Fairlie Clark and John Smith of Calcutta as his executors.

There was a wave of confidence in British business methods and British business houses. Prawn Krishna Haldar, who was transported for seven years in 1829 on a charge of forgery, left his vast property in charge of an agency house, Mackintosh & Co. In 1823 Rashbehari Sarmono left Rs. 43,000 to be spent in feeding 100,000 Brahmins in the hands of Palmer & Co. A very cautious investor Uday Narayan Basak made a will in 1828 which is very significant in this context. He wrote, "At present the interest on Company's paper is low. For this reason buy the notes of creditable agency houses. You will lend the money to five or six houses. You will not lend the money to a small house."

The ancillaries of European commerce were banking and insurance. Commercial crops like indigo brought about some concentration of floating European capital. We would not perhaps be wrong if we describe it as a period of British predatory capitalism. There was extensive over speculation in indigo and opium. There were extraordinary fluctuations in the price of opium between 1814 and 1838. The average price in 1814-19 was Rs. 2262 per chest. Next six years it fell to Rs. 1426 per chest and in the succeeding six years to 1111. There was a diminishing curve until the beginning of crisis in China. In the years 1814-15 to 1819-20 3962 chests were sold per annum. In the next six year period 3985 chests. In the third period of six years the average was 7365 chests. In the last six years 13,724. The average increased to 18,000 chests per annum before the crisis began (Finance Dept. Prog 24 June, 1846). The get-rich-quick feeling very much prevailed in British commercial circles. The Deccan prize money of 1 kror, the Bharatpur prize money of 42 lakhs helped to swell this speculative spirit. There were so many wars between 1799 and 1326. The Agency houses granted loans

on the personal security of one or two parties to indigo concerns. They thus kept some of the necessitous Europeans out of the hands of the 'native' money lenders but indigo being a forced crop and the price liable to violent fluctuations the whole structure rested upon a foundation of quicksand. "The capital is supplied month by month until the produce is brought for shipment to the port and many months' outlay must be paid before the article has assumed an investmentable shape . . . once stop the advances and the debt and properties themselves are destroyed. Continue them and with average crop and fair prices the debt is recovered and the value of the property is maintained"—Larpent—*Facts explanatory of the connection of the late firm of Cockerell & co. of Calcutta with the Union Bank of Calcutta.* If we take into consideration attitudes, organisation and leadership it was certainly not very sensible commercial business.

Almost all big British business firms in Calcutta became insolvent during the years 1830-33. But such was the state of insolvency law in those days that "the insolvents passed the ordeal of insolvency courts without a single enquiry only to renew with undiminished boldness the old course of extravagance and speculation." (Cal. Review Vol. IX 1848). The big agency houses that fell between 1830 and 1833 have left a record in some cases of almost unbelievable dishonesty. Their admitted liabilities and dividends they paid have been thus tabulated:—

Liabilities in Sicca rupees		Dividends paid
Palmer & Co.	280 lakhs	30 p.c.
Cruttenden Mackillop & Co.	120 lakhs	26 p.c.
Alexander & Co.	400 lakhs	6 p.c.
(Lord Combermere had deposited with them his share of Bharatpur prize money amounting to 6 lakhs)		
Fergusson & Co.	360 lakhs	36½ p.c.
Mackintosh & Co.	260 lakhs	14 p.c.
Colvin & Co.	110 lakhs	29½ p.c.
	1,530 lakhs	Average: 25 p.c.

(Calcutta Review Vol. IX 1848—Commercial Morality and Commercial Prosperity etc.)

Even after the failure of these agency houses a second and a very different phase of Indo-British partnership began in the pursuit of commercial profit during the years 1834-1847. This was largely due to the dominance of some outstanding personalities in the field of Indian business—Dwarkanath Tagore, Rustomji Cowasji, Motilal Sil (in British records Mutty Lall Seal). Three most notable of the undertakings associated with them were Carr Tagore & Co., Rustomji Turner

& Co., Oswald Seal & Co. The business pattern is best described in the language of these days—"general merchants and agents." The Indians were dominant partners in these concerns with which their names were associated. Dwarkanath Tagore and Rustomji Cowasji became also directors of the Union Bank which became the biggest Indo-British banking venture with a capital of more than a million pounds. They were two of the four Indian directors, eight being Englishmen. Rustomji Cowasji and Dwarkanath Tagore were also connected with British partners in the Hope River Insurance Company, Globe Insurance Company, Oriental Life Insurance Company, Alliance Insurance Company. Dwarkanath Tagore also became one of the promoters of the Bengal Coal Co. and the Calcutta Docking Co. European business sought their cooperation in banking, insurance and other ventures because they were natives of great credit, merchants of great opulence and importance. There was a widening horizon. But the basic weaknesses of Bengali business and predatory British capitalism were there.

Dwarkanath Tagore was born in 1794. The family was in affluent circumstances. He was educated at Sherbourne School and began to practise as a law agent to the rich zamindars of Bengal. He was appointed Dewan to the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium in 1829. He resigned five years after because his extensive business activities left him no time for the Board's work. He was a partner of Mackintosh & Co. and director of the Commercial Bank. His association with the Union Bank and the foundation of the Carr Tagore & Co. in 1834 has already been referred to. He also set up silk filatures, ship building works, indigo factories and with the cooperation of British entrepreneurs established Bengal Coal Company in 1845. When the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce was set up in 1834 he became one of its members along with Rustomji Cowasji.

Motilal Sil, after having acquired working knowledge of English, began his business career. He began as a dealer in bottles and corks. As was customary in those days he became very soon a banian to European firms. He became very prominent not long after in export import business. He began to send cargoes of indigo, salt, sugar, saltpetre and opium in distant ventures. He turned his attention to shipping as well. Some of his tug steamers were used in coastal shipping.

Rustomji Cowasji was born in 1792. He came from Bombay to Calcutta in 1821. His brother was a prominent businessman in Bombay. He became banian to several European firms and then like Dwarkanath Tagore became a partner of British businessmen in insurance, shipping, banking, docking etc. He was the owner of a shipping dock at Kidderpore, a director of the Bengal Salt Company. He enjoyed great prestige in Calcutta business circles.

Business on traditional lines still continued. Asutosh Dey was banian to Ralli Brothers and other business houses and mercantile firms in Calcutta. He had certainly not the time to do all that was expected of a banian in the old sense of the term. He functioned through his deputies. But almost every firm wanted the

prestige of its association with him. We find from case records that Ramgopal Mullick sent opium to Macao. Parbati Churan Bose sent supplies through Gillanders Artuthnot to Isle de France. Dwarkanath's idea was to prevent Europeans from draining India of her wealth. He wanted to draw as many Indians as possible from agricluture to commerce and industry by his example (Gynanweshan, 9 Aug. 1834, Samachar Chandrika 9 Feb. 1833). Perhaps he was trying too many things at the same time.

The success of Ramdulal Dey perhaps inspired even Maharajadhiraj Pratapchand of Burdwan to engage in trade and business in Calcutta through the agency of Cossinath Mullick. His was not a very successful venture and some of the surplus money of the Maharaja was advanced to Colvin Bazett & Co. The business venture of the Burdwan Raj did not prosper. (Maharanee Pearee Coomaree and Maharanee Anand Coomaree Vs. Maharaja Tejchand Bahadur 1823). An unfortunate attempt to imitate Dwarkanath Tagore, a tragi-comedy, is also on record. Dwarkanath Tagore befriended Raja Barada Kanta Ray and helped him to recover his rights to his ancestral estate. Several very expensive legal proceedings were instituted by Dwarkanath Tagore on behalf of Baradakanta Ray in consequence of which he obtained two decrees in the equity side and was adjudged extensive zamindaries of great value in Jessore. He was immediately after approached by one Henry Fuller King and requested to become a partner in his business. Baradakanta Ray had not an adequate knowledge of the English language. But deeds were drawn up in that language for opening a house of business. He was asked to keep the matter secret from Rustomji Cowasji and Dwarkanath Tagore. He was told that "there was nothing to prevent your orator from becoming a merchant of as great opulence and importance in Calcutta as the said Dwarkanath Tagore by joining the English gentlemen as Dwarkanath Tagore had done." The draft of the agreement, he was told, must not be shown to Dwarkanath Tagore. Rs. 20,000 was to be paid by H. F. King and Rs. 150,000 by Baradakanta Ray and the business of merchants and agents heretofore carried on under the style of H. F. King & Co. would, henceforth, be carried on under the designation of King Ray & Co. An advertisement was made to this effect in the Exchange Gazette. This attempt to imitate Dwarkanath Tagore caused young Baradakanta Ray very considerable loss immediately after the recovery of his property with the help of Dwarkanath Tagore. He became a victim of commercial sharp practice in this attempt to imitate Dwarkanath Tagore in 1836. Dwarkanath was then in his heyday.

The collapse of the Union Bank in 1847 came as a rude shock to those Indian businessmen who were associated with British businessmen in different enterprises. The Union Bank was the biggest banking venture so far. As it has been pointed out Indians were junior partners in this enterprise. Its failure brought down with it Cockerell & Co., Colville Gilmore & Co., Lyall Matheson & Co., Carr

Tagore & Co., Rustomji Turner & Co. and Oswald Seal & Co. The Directors of the bank overlooked the interests of the shareholders and depositors of the bank to promote the interests of those firms in which their fortunes were invested. W. P. Grant, a director of the bank, said in reply to a cross examination: "At the Directors' table the names were mentioned and credit was mentioned on these names and the Directors, since there was no objection to granting a credit on these names, granted a credit of 4 lakhs. Credit was given on the names, not on the shares. Radha Madhab Banerjee ((he was a director at that time and had 146 shares) was one of the original dissidents." Seven out of the eight British Directors were hopelessly indebted to the bank. They took advantage of the advance system for their houses. Speculation was overdone and an unnatural forced system brought about this failure. As the Secretary of the Union Bank wrote to one of his friends in England about the middle of 1847, "If we have a bad indigo crop the whole of Calcutta would suspend." Dwarkanath Tagore had died in England before the collapse of this structure of Indo-British cooperation. Dalhousie wrote, "The failure of the Union Bank has taken place. The history of banking presents probably no greater instance of mismanagement than that which has brought this establishment with a paid up capital of one million sterling to ruin. The Union Bank published accounts but they were fabricated to deceive and did more harm than good." (Financial Dept. To Court No. 29 of 1848).

After 1848, Bengali businessmen practically withdrew from any adventurous business activity in Calcutta. Muttylall Seal and Asutosh Dey were not, of course, swept off their feet by these failures. But Rustomji Cowasji and his firm and Dwarkanath Tagore's Carr Tagore & Co. came down with a crash. A distrust of European business became a part of Bengali business thinking. The Court of Directors wrote in 1831, after the failure of Palmer & Co., "The difficulty is not the want of capital but the want of possessing sufficient control over it and we are persuaded that this difficulty is created by combining in the same persons the operations of agency and trading." They feared that there would be a distrust of Europeans on the part of the native community. Now after the failure of the Union Bank and the chain of failures following it, "there was loss of commercial confidence beyond all precedence."

Ramdulal Dey died in 1825, Asutosh Dey in 1856, Dwarkanath Tagore in 1846, Rustomji Cowasji in 1852, Mutty Lall Seal in 1854. Their descendants showed no inclination to imitate them. "The large capitals" they inherited were invested in houses, lands, gardens, government securities, company's paper, zamindaris, taluks, mortgages, rent free lands, gold and silver plates, jewels etc. Over trading, over speculation, fraud and failure of their western exemplars had created a reaction in Bengali mind. Those who now associated themselves with Europeans were only second hand merchants and commission traders doing small scale business.

The Permanent Settlement, Regulation VII of 1799 and Regulation V. of 1812 ensured security of landed property to zamindars. Bengali mind could now think only about land and investment in land and the weaknesses of traditional society perhaps reinforced this attitude. In the case of a zamindari mortgage in 1825 we find that besides the right to collect rent from tenants zamindari rights included the following: Commons, waste, marshes, moors, heaths, salt lands, timber and other trees, forests, woods, underwoods, ways, paths, passages, streams of water, rivers, lakes, pools, tanks, reservoirs, aqueducts, wells, water courses, and all and whatsoever might pass under the description of *Jalkar*, markets, *nazarana, Salami*, escheats and all rights, services, perquisites, fees, fines, profits, advantages, privileges, emoluments etc. In a case instituted in 1847 (Uttam Dasee Vs. Karunamayee Dasee) we find that for payment of land-revenue of Rs. 13,454 in 14 mahals the rent realized amounted to Rs. 40,291. We would not be wrong if we regard this state of things as more or less typical by the middle of the nineteenth century. Under the circumstances moneyed men could not but consider investment in zamindari as safe, prestigious and profitable. Subinfeudation created new openings for investment in land.

The example of Dwarkanath Tagore is not irrelevant in this context. When the Union Bank failed, as also the Carr Tagore & Co. the family of this Bengali entrepreneur could be saved from ruin and could prosper only because he could leave extensive house property in Calcutta—"Messuages, tenaments, hereditaments etc." in the language of judicial records—and extensive zamindaries throughout Bengal.* This lesson was driven home to the mind of monied men in Calcutta who wanted safe investment for their descendants.

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* Dwarkanath's Will (O. W. 15736): An Inventory of his estate and effects:

1. Real properties in Pabna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Dacca, Junglemahals, Tipperah, Faridpur, Hooghly (mention of two Patni taluks) Izara mahals in Cuttack and Jessore.
2. Indigo factories in six places.
3. Kumarkhali silk filature.
4. Salt works.
5. Hauts, bazars and lands—
   - (a) Dwelling house at Joarsanko.
   - (b) Belgatchia Garden.
   - (c) Three storied mansion at 41, Chowringhee.
   - (d) Two other pieces of land at the same place.
   - (e) Upper roomed house at Ballygunge.
   - (f) Three houses at Jarasanko.

Houses and buildings at Jorasanko, godown at Tallah, houses, buildings, tanks in Beliaghata, Bhowanipore, Entally, Tangra, an estate in 24 Parganas, land at Baranagore, Tangra & other places.

51 Union Bank Shares.

11 shares in Oriental life Assurance Co.

In 1865 cotton speculation in the Bombay Presidency caused a veritable earthquake in which business houses collapsed like houses of cards. The tumultuous epicentre of this upheaval was the Bombay city. Parsi businessmen could recover from the shock of this crisis very slowly and steadily but not so Bengali businessmen after the shocks of 1829-33 and 1847-48. This difference in reaction to such shocks deserves to be noted. The Parsis perhaps regarded themselves as 'a guest people' in India in those days. They found themselves denied the conventional routes to prestige and power by the traditional society. They had no other alternative and they gradually developed into an elite entrepreneurial section of the Indian population. But in Bengal zamindari property, with its various grades of sub-infeudation, created what may be described almost as terra mania. The tendency towards accumulation of wealth which might lead to capitalism—commercial or industrial—which we notice in the case of the Marwaris, Bhatias, Chettiars, Khojas and Borahs, was not there in Bengal. Indigenous entrepreneurship could not develop in such an uncongenial environment.

The writer in the Calcutta Review, already referred to, wrote in 1848, "So numerous, so desperate, so vast have been the breaches of trust that insolvency has developed in this country, so wild and infatuated has been the course of speculation that public confidence is destroyed in Great Britain and British capital may be altogether withheld." But this did not happen. The posture of the government—a more vigilant administration—had perhaps something to do with later developments. Different men from England with different habits, different ideas, different principles now appear in India's economic life. The flow of British capital began. A stringent and complete law of insolvency helped to regulate the new set up. From simple partnership we pass to limited liability with Chambers of Commerce, more effective than before, watching over and protecting the interests of British commerce. The managing agency system began to operate. After the unregulated imperialism of the days of Clive, Verelst, Cartier and Hastings, the transition to regulated imperialism was effected in the days of Cornwallis. In the same manner we pass from a period of predatory commercial ventures, a period of blind eagerness of individuals, to a settled, well regulated phase of British commercial capitalism after the practical errors of trade had gradually discovered themselves and produced a proper level. British industrial capitalism in India followed. England's prodominant role in an underdeveloped economy became well

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10 shares in Steam Navigation Co.
3 shares in Calcutta Steam Tug Association.
3 shares in Assam Co.
1 share in Bombay Bank.

"I Dwarakanath Tagore have placed at the disposal of the said firm of Carr Tagore & Co. as a loan to the said firm and for Capital stock of the said co-partnership business the sum of Company rupee one million".

established in the second half of the nineteenth century. British business enterprise in India entered upon a period of "maturity, prosperity and authority" and a new racial caste developed in business.

Cloth Production and Trade in Late Eighteenth Century Bengal

A Report from the Danish Factory in Serampore

During the second half of the 1780's the Directors of the Danish Asiatic Company with growing apprehension saw a sharp decrease in their formerly lucrative trade in Indian textiles. Unsatisfactory sales in Copenhagen at first made them try to put the blame on their factory in Bengal for paying too much for the cloth. Besides refuting the complaints the factors' report throws interesting light on aspects of the production and trade in Bengal in these years.

The Danish settlement of Serampore, a few miles above Calcutta, had been under the administration of the Company from its acquisition in 1755 until 1777 when the Danish king took it over.[1] This transfer aimed at facilitating the private Danish India trade which virtually enjoyed free competition with the Asiatic Company. Neutral Danish trade had expanded during the American War of Independence, and the Company's factors had benefited largely from their being—together with a few private merchants—almost the sole neutral exporters of Bengal piece goods. These favourable conditions radically changed with the Peace in 1783, and the Danish factors now suffered from the reintroduction of free and open competition in this trade from other European nations. The production and trade of Bengal also suffered from this disproportionate rise in the demand, which by far surpassed the production of normal years.

The factory's detailed report on these conditions, inserted in the General Letter of August 7, 1789, was written by the head factor Jacob B. Scavenius.[2] He had entered the Company's service in Bengal in 1779 as a writer's assistant and now occupied the position of head factor; shortly after writing the report he repatriated in 1790 with an ample fortune and was later awarded the Company's gold medal for his service.

Scavenius was well read and familiar with the works of Adam Smith and James Stewart; and although the report was originally written as an answer to the Directors' complaints, it contains nothing of an apology. His description of conditions in Bengal was based on solid experience and was cool and detached. Because trade was the sole reason for Danish settlements in India, he viewed with concern the increasing British dominance; but his report is fair and unbiased and shows nothing of the strong political engagement which somewhat tends to diminish the historical value of some of the contemporary French reports hitherto used as a supplement to the British material. His report should, therefore, be accepted as

highly reliable and at the same time representative not only of the Danes but also of the other non-British nations trading in Bengal in the post-war period. It should, however, be observed that the report assumes the existence of a regular factory or agency in Bengal; so it applies in a higher degree to companies and regularly trading merchants than to occasional ships calling at Calcutta. The present report, originally meant as information for a worried Court of Directors in Copenhagen, might, however, be of interest because of its informative analysis of some important aspects of the economic history of Bengal during the last period of free European trade.

"In this letter, therefore, we shall concern ourselves with the general contents of your letters and our current affairs. The conditions of trade, the present state of affairs, and our prospects for the future, involving as they do both present and past experience, will always be able to furnish abundant material for letters even longer than this one.

From the previous letters, especially the one of September 15, 1788, we are happy to learn the contentment of the honourable Court of Directors concerning our correspondence as well as the return cargo of the Dannebrog about which at that time high hopes were entertained of an advantageous sale. We are, therefore, much concerned to learn from the more recent letter of November 19 that the sale has in no respect come up to the high hopes previously entertained, and although you repeat that the return cargo consisted of good and irreproachable goods, it is the opinion of your Court that they were bought too dear; thus especially the fine goods (which were actually only middling) have been almost unsaleable, and it was precisely on these fine goods your Court had expected a considerable gain.

This view—which is relative—is always correct as long as the sale of a cargo does not surpass the prime costs with a sufficient advantage, and the lesser the advantage of the India trade the more correct it is. But unfortunately this year we have furthermore contracted for a considerable quantity of fine goods for the two expected ships (10 to 12 per cent of the total amount), and this cannot easily be altered now. Although this year these goods will be both good and really fine, they most likely will sell at a loss and not with advantage. The latest information from all European markets for India goods is that all these sorts of goods, especially the fine ones (however good and well chosen they are), were sold below prime costs and some were even practically unsaleable. If this goes on, there will be no hope!

Long before the arrival of the English ships the same complaint had come in from London together with orders from the Court of Directors there about changes in their return cargoes and other arrangements, provided the Bengal trade was to be carried on with advantage. Therefore the government at Calcutta has already appointed Mr. Blacquere, formerly the Company's cloth examiner at Calcutta, to travel about in some weaving districts assisting the Company's servants

in procuring cloths for investment ('to assist the residents with his advice relative to the investment'). This man has long-standing experience, and expert knowledge of the products of the country, and he is considered as one of the piece goods experts of Bengal. Scarcity of silver in the country since the last war, extremely hard times, and seasons of exceedingly high prices for the poor, toiling, common people are some of the causes of the decline in piece goods; although the English government has taken many steps towards ameliorations, the pressing debt has not allowed any remission or relaxation in the rigid collection of revenues.

The loss which is generally connected with capital employed in the piece goods trade and advances to the weavers, increases yearly because of their poor condition, and in the latest years probably amounts to many per cent.

The demand of the Europeans, especially for up-country goods, has considerably contributed to raise the prices. As it here seems convenient, we shall try to give an informative account of the country's way of production—so different from the European way—which is generally managed with certain funds, by help of machines, and under supervision of professional entrepreneurs. In Bengal, on the other hand, no machines shorten the work of the artisan; the spinner and the weaver require and expect no more than is necessary to pay for the material, procure enough to eat and to have a little leisure; when times are good they even flourish in this way. Always poor, without even thinking of better conditions, they work solely for their subsistence; they have no prospects of improving their work or of changing the organization or the tools they use; and as a weaver cannot become a member of another caste or tribe than his father was, he is bound to follow his father's trade and will never become anything else than a weaver; therefore, he does not think ahead, as long as he has enough money or advances to buy a few seers of cotton which he himself, his wife, and his family may clean and spin, and as long as he may take his piece of cloth to the market in the weaving district ('shandee'); here dalals or brokers always turn up with ready money to buy; they are employed to examine, appraise and purchase cloths by gomastas and others who reside in the district to collect piece goods. Through unwearying industry and with the help of a few paltry tools these poor people, nevertheless, are able to produce the prettiest and finest cloths without the use of machines. But because of the custom in this country, that the son can only have the profession which his father had, these artisans will never disappear, unless the entire nation should be extinguished. Times might become so hard and a devastating war might block the sale so that three-fourths of all the weaver families must perish and die for want of subsistence, but the rest of them will immediately recover so much easier because all their produce will speedily be sold; on the other hand, the quality of the cloth always deteriorates as a consequence of such hard blows. The history of the India trade since the beginning of this century renders obvious and irrefutable proofs of this; old natives and Europeans who have long resided in the country and who have traded in the country's products assert that in Bengal the

prices of the piece goods have risen 12 to 15 per cent everywhere during the last twenty years alone, not including the changes caused by the disproportion between gold and silver currency. The prices on up-country goods—including Bahar and all other goods coming down from Oudh, Benares, and other provinces above the Company's territories—have proportionately risen even much more since 1778—that is, more than 20 per cent; this is due partly to the scarcity of silver in the country, which alone may be used in payment for these cloths, but mostly, however, to the demand of the Europeans, because half the cargo of every home bound ship, if possible, should consist of such goods; so more money than ever before has drifted annually this way, and the Europeans with all their gomastas and dalals as well as Armenians and natives have overbid each other in prices in these up-country weaving districts, especially in the districts of Benares and Tandah; their whole object was to collect and send down the proper quantity for which they had capital while the river still held sufficient water for boats (from September till January), and although the quality deteriorated while the prices rose, they were still saleable. The present great expectations of the advantages of piece goods trade to Manilla will certainly not improve matters. First of all, however, we must give an account of two persons who are always employed in buying piece goods in the districts.

A *gomasta* is a man who is trusted with the capital to spend on the buying of piece goods. He must possess knowledge and experience in the trade; when he goes up in February or March he is given a clerk, a treasurer, and some peons who are under his orders, and of the total capital to be invested he takes with him 20 to 25 per cent; the rest is remitted in bills of exchange during the following months in accordance with his demand or when the rate of exchange is most favourable; often several people of this category are used, according to the size of the weaving district in which they are employed. Normally the native merchants—often cooperating in a company of two or three—send one of their family as well, just as the rich Armenians employ their poor countrymen for that purpose. All transport of piece goods as well as of other goods takes place on the river—except from a few places near this settlement. The rainy season, during which the river runs full and becomes navigable for boats and smaller vessels, starts in June and ends in September; therefore, all transport of goods down to Bengal takes place from August to January. At other seasons—from the middle of February to June—long detours have to be made, the vessels often have to be unloaded and the goods transported over land, which is much too expensive, as the aurungs, or weaving districts, are often situated far from the navigable river; in that case the goods are transported on bullocks or in carts drawn by bullocks down to the river, from where they are generally shipped to this settlement in two consignments in October and December.

Dalals should rightly be translated into brokers, and that is what they actually are; they are employed by the gomastas to examine and appraise the cloths and

purchase them from the weavers especially at the weekly markets in all the weaving districts, where the weaver brings his piece of cloth along and the gomasta turns up with his chest of money to do business. These dalals are to be found everywhere; in the European settlements they run about for the weavers in the neighbourhood selling their zirzaiks, carradaris, dooreas, and handkerchiefs etc. Often they themselves employ the weavers by giving them advances. Their commission—called by the Portuguese name of Customade—is half an anna on the rupee or 3 1/8 per cent from their employers on all their business; one gomasta often employs many dalals according to his financial resources or to circumstances in general; particularly if the weavers are so poor that they must always have advances in order to deliver good cloths—which is generally the case here in Bengal; the advantage of good dalals is considerable; they have a detailed knowledge of the conditions of the district in general, and they know exactly—down to one anna—how much each weaver might demand for his piece of cloth; they are thoroughly familiar with the yarn and its price according to the costs of cotton and rice; not only good cloths but also advantageous purchase depend in general very much on the gomasta (i.e. the men to whom the Europeans, Armenians and rich natives actually entrust their money) and on the dalals whom they employ; therefore, the same piece of cloth—viz. at the same price—might be better from one man than from another, and this discrepancy is generally largest in the districts where fine goods are made at prices differing from ten to forty rupees; particularly of these honourable men collude, as it happens, and defraud their employers.

The district of *Birbhum* is large and almost solely inhabited by weavers. Because of the changes of times the prices of the cloths produced there have been raised very much, but the pieces are among the very few in Bengal which have remained almost equal in quality as well as in length and breadth; so they are practically the only ones which we might describe in such a way that they might be appraised accordingly. The cotton yarn which is used for these cloths is a middling sort, a rather coarse yarn which varies so little that there are only three assortments of all Birbhum gurrahs, i.e. ordinary, middling, and superfine gurrahs, the latter are also called the English Company's assortment. The difference is usually reckoned to be half a rupee per piece, so that when, for instance, ordinary or Dutch gurrahs are bought at 85 rupees per corge, the good or middling assortments are at 95 rupees, and the best at 105 rupees; this should be understood relatively, because gurrahs of the English Company's correct assortment such as the cloths, especially in the bales nos. 901 to 951, and 34 other bales nos. 1083 to 1090, 1111 to 1118 and 1156 et seq. in the Dannebrog 1788 are not to be acquired now at less than 110 to 120 rupees per corge.

It is estimated that 160,000 pieces, or rather more, of Birbhum gurrahs are sent to Europe annually; the English investment in this category is never less than 80,000 pieces. They have at least seven ships annually, and no ship carries

less than 150 bales or 12,000 pieces of gurrahs, but generally they carry 200 bales each. A very considerable quantity of gurrahs is sent to Batavia and the East Coast; this quantity, together with that which is used in the country itself, is supposed by far to surpass the quantity exported to Europe; so that probably more than 400,000 pieces are manufactured in the district of Birbhum in normal years; but even in December, nevertheless, such a scarcity of good middling gurrahs might frequently occur, that no quantity can be acquired except for ready money and at high prices. With the exception of the English Company's investment natives dominate most of this trade and ready money is, therefore, highly necessary for the Europeans if gurrahs are to be acquired at reasonable prices; so gurrahs have a certain and constant value, lesser alterations in quality, and are not exposed to so many changes as other branches of the piece goods trade in which the Europeans—that is, the English—have the largest part and where the sole purpose is to make money."

(The following two pages of the report, omitted here, give a detailed comparison between the weight systems of Denmark and Bengal.)

"One Birbhum maund is estimated as equal to 3/4 Bengal maund, but as the seers of which it consists should only weigh 58 sicca rupees 10 annas, so the weight of the accepted maund is equal to 2345 sicca rupees, which, divided with 80 rupees (the correct weight of one bazar seer here in Bengal) makes only 29 5/16 seers instead of being valued at 30 seers or 3/4 maund. Such a maund of yarn in Birbhum, ready for the weaver for gurrahs (viz. 2345 rupees divided with 42 7/8 make 54 11/16 pound Danish weight), varies according to the changing prices of cotton and the cost of rice from 20 to 24 a 26 sicca rupee as the lowest and the highest prices there, as cotton in Bengal during the last years has been extraordinarily expensive, from 50 to 70 per cent above normal; and in Calcutta the price has been from 18 to 22 rupees and for a short while 26 rupees per maund, whereas the medium price has normally been 13 to 14 rupees. As twenty seers of rice were hardly to be acquired for one rupee, instead of generally one and a half maund or more during good seasons, it is no wonder that the high prices of yarn in Birbhum and other places have been the object of much complaint. In our calculation, however, we shall only reckon one Birbhum maund of yarn in the district at an average of 22 sicca rupees per 29 1/4 Bengal seers—roughly 54 pound Danish weight—as the lowest medium price. Loss on the cotton during the cleaning depends much on the quality of the thread and the use for which it is destined; for fine cloths up to half of it might be lost, but in Birbhum it is reckoned that good cotton for gurrahs generally loose one-seventh of its weight during the cleaning. What we are referring to as good gurrah yarn can be seen from a small quantity sent home as samples in the previous seasons, that is 1 maund 19 seers with the Dannebrog 1788, and 2 maunds 24 seers of 14 annas per seer with the Castellet Dansborg this year. No quantity of such yarn is to be acquired in this settlement unless a man is previously sent up to Birbhum to

contract for it and collect it, which accordingly makes the price at arrival here somewhat higher than there; furthermore, it takes up so much space and represents such an insignificant investment that a full cargo, even with a gain of 80 to 100 per cent, would hardly pay for the transport; nevertheless we submit to the honourable Court of Directors to take note of the sale of this sort of yarn and inform us about it; we have bought the small quantity which was sent home through some black merchants from Chinsurah, just as the Dutch always have sent home a quantity in their ships in former years. The prices will depend on the times and on many circumstances in Birbhum; this year it will be almost impossible to acquire cotton yarn in this settlement at 15 annas per bazar seer, but if cotton goes down and prospects improve, one bazar seer (about 1 7/8 pound Danish weight) might be valued at 13 1/2 to 15 annas which per pound Danish weight makes 30 to 31 in all or, at most, 32 skilling Danish currency; for if one sicca rupee is valued at 4 mark Danish, which is the maximum, then 30 skilling Danish per pound are approximately 14 annas per seer or 25 sicca rupees per Birbhum maund of 29 1/4 seers (identical with 54 pound Danish weight and slightly more).

A piece of good Birbhum gurrah requires slightly more than 3 1/2 seers of yarn, so eight pieces take a whole Birbhum maund; the yarn thus costs 2 3/4 sicca rupees per piece, which makes 55 sicca rupees per corge of 20 pieces. The weavers' wages differ according to whether the demand for cloths in the aurungs is great or small; during the weaver's bad season—December, January, February, when only a few gurrahs are to be found on his market and he mostly has to be employed by dalals of limited means who are able to give him money in advance or buy his cloth—his pay for one piece of gurrah is generally no more than 10 annas; normally it is 11 to 12 annas and sometimes slightly more; if the weaver is an able worker he might finish his piece in five and a half to six days; but when his feast days are deducted he is able at most to produce four and a half to five pieces per month, by which he is generally estimated to earn three sicca rupees and—when times are best—three and a half rupees at most; if his family is able to help him, especially with cleaning and spinning the cotton, this is estimated at one-fifth to one-fourth of his earnings, but no more. Three to four rupees per month are thus the best weaver's highest earnings if he is fully employed; an occasional small customade to dalals and his other employers should be deducted together with many other small exactions, not from the English government, nor actually from the Company's residents or servants in the district, but from their employees, who under the name of the English Company's gomastas, dalals and many other merciless natives are the real tormentors of the weavers and common people under the Company; this probably cannot be totally changed because of the conditions of the country, but something might be changed—as, for instance, the conditions of the weaver in times of scarcity and hardship.

The rich native who held the gurrah contract with the English Company in 1787 forced every weaver whom he would employ to give him two to three rupees and more in salamy which is said to have yielded to him 16 to 20,000 rupees; furthermore he forbade all able weavers whom he registered to work for others as long as he would employ them, because he had the Company's protection and its assistance in using force; nevertheless, he had to pay a penalty for about 20.000 pieces which he was unable to deliver, as he had contracted at a price at which nobody was able to deliver gurrahs; such arrangements ruin the district's trade for others who are thereby exposed to constant fraud and eventually only get the worst produce. For the weaver must have his subsistence—or stop working and perish.

For several years the English government has tried many ways to procure good cloth at advantageous prices for the Company, but in doing so it has always spoiled the trade of the other nations and the natives rather than gained any advantage for the Company. The products are in conspicuous decline, the common man is exceedingly poor, and the silver currency circulating in the country since the last war is utterly insufficient in proportion to the production; anyhow, it seems that the government has done everything as well as such as oppressive war and hard times would allow.

As previously, the English Company now collects the goods demanded for the home cargoes through its servants, and no contracts exist with native merchants, as far as we know; the residents have to render account and a detailed description of the use of every rupee and anna which they and their employees spend in the cloth trade from the beginning to the end; then the government allows them 10 per cent in commission on the invested capital up to a certain sum and 5 per cent on the rest above. Since Mr. Blacquere is now going to travel in the most important districts at the Company's expense solely for the sake of the piece goods trade, changes might take place next year at his suggestions.

The annual land-tax to the government is two sicca rupees for every weaver in possession of as much land as a bigha where his hut and a small enclosure are situated; if he has more land which he cultivates, he pays as a farmer after different rates; for example, one bigha of land, used for betel nuts, is sometimes taxed up to 20 rupees. A weaver's earnings from 20 pieces of cloth are then, according to the above-mentioned, at 12 annas per piece, 15 rupees.

When a gomasta is sent to an aurung he normally gets a certain monthly salary and sometimes even a small customade. If he is employed by a Bengali, Moorish or Armenian merchant his monthly salary is from 15 to 20 rupees; his clerk or accountant gets 12, his treasurer 10 rupees, and at least three to four peons, who are indispensable for daily visits to the weavers, for other errands, and for keeping guard in his palliote, get 3 rupees each as their monthly salary.

Although these people often remain all the year in the weaving districts, we shall only calculate for 10 months, that is:

one gomasta per month	16 rupees, in 10 months	160 rupees
one clerk per month	12 rupees, in 10 months	120 rupees
one treasurer per month	10 rupees, in 10 months	100 rupees
3-4 peons, per month	9-12 rupees, in 10 months	90-120 rupees
	per annum	500 rupees

and for a palliote or a house for himself and the others to live in and to store the cloths in, which, when a European sometimes uses it, is called a small factory, 100-150 rupees; here only calculated at ... ... 100 rupees

600 rupees

If the gomasta is an able man and knows how to employ himself and the others, he might spend from 12 to 16,000 sicca rupees and collect from 3 to 4,000 pieces of gurrah during a period of 9 to 10 months; if he has to procure more pieces, he will have to employ other people at other places, which involves identical costs; therefore it is calculated that $2\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 annas are paid in salary per piece, which makes at least 3 rupees 8 annas per corge. The gomasta employs the dalal, and he, therefore, puts the dalal's customade, which is half an anna on the rupee of the price, on the account of his employer. If a piece of gurrah from the loom, as shown above, is calculated at $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees per piece, or 70 rupees per corge, then the dalal's customade per 20 pieces is 35 annas or 2 rupees 3 annas. Now the pieces are to be washed, for which purpose there are certain washermen in all weaving districts whose washing can be imitated nowhere; in general this costs $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna per piece, which is 1 rupee 14 annas to 2 rupees per corge. In Birbhum the salary for washing is generally paid per 100 pieces, and as gurrahs are coarse cloths, the ordinary payment is 10 rupees per 100 pieces or 2 rupees per corge. During the few bad months, when there is not much business and therefore only few gurrahs to wash, the washing might be had at 9 rupees and perhaps $8\frac{5}{8}$, or 140 annas per 100 pieces; it should, however, be noted that all good washing in the weaving districts ought to take place after the rainy season has started; the price is then $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna per piece and as a rule 10 rupees per 100 pieces. From the whiteness of the cloths it is possible immediately to detect whether they have been washed at the proper time or not.

After a detailed account of every small expense we shall now put them down together. In ordinary, good seasons:

	r.	a.
(a) Cotton yarn for 20 pieces of good gurrah costs ...	55	
(b) Weavers' wages for the same ...	15	

	r.	a.
(c) Broker's salary or dalal's customade	2	3
(d) Washermen's salaries for the same	2	
(e) Salaries and expenses to the employees are normally 3¾ rupees for corge but are here only calculated at	3	8
for 20 pieces sicca ...	77	11

All these expenses put together are included in what is called the aurung price or the actual cost of the cloths when they are ready to be sent down from the weaving districts to the European settlements. The costs of transportation from the aurungs to the river should further be added, together with packing, boat hire, and expenses to sepoys and other people necessary to supervise and watch the goods until they are landed and delivered at Calcutta or at any other settlement. These costs, which all together pass under the name of 'charges merchandize' with the English, amount to 2½ to 5 per cent on the aurung price, depending on how far away the district is situated; previously, government duties at 2½ per cent were further added and paid at the nearest custom-house either in Patna, Cossimbazar, Hughli or Dacca, but in June last year they were abolished; this might be calculated at 3 per cent on the prime costs, which slightly remedies the loss on the gold mohurs and is one of the present government's good deeds—even though detrimental to the revenues of the country.

Previously it was a general practice among the Europeans to buy cloths in the settlements with a certain profit of, say, 20 to 25 and even 30 per cent on the aurung prices; they furthermore paid the costs of transportation, which always under the name of 'charges merchandize'—duties included—amounted to 3½ to 7 per cent or thereabout. When a quantity of gurrahs as described above (which are actually middling good gurrahs, 7 to 10 rupees better per corge than ordinary or Dutch gurrahs of 35 cubits and of indifferent quality, but neither so fine nor so good as the English Company's best assortment) was bought with a profit of 20 per cent and costs of 5 per cent—or 25 per cent in all—it would amount to 97 rupees per corge in good seasons; such good gurrahs could hardly be sold with any profit at less than 102 rupees per corge in years like this when cotton thread has cost 24 to 26 sicca rupees per 30 seers and the difference between gold and silver is calculated at only 3 to 4 per cent—due to the present advantage of not paying government customs; this way of buying cloths was very convenient and appropriate as well as simple, as long as people traded honestly, because the inexperienced were able to buy cloths of just the same good quality and at the same reasonable prices as the most experienced; this way is now obsolete because of fraud, especially in connection with cloths of the same category but of different sorts; *baftas,* for example, which were actually Luckypore, were named 'fine', *chittabully* were named *callipatty* and so forth; these pieces of cloth did not seem more expensive than they ought to be according to their names in the

invoice, but by changing the names and prices accordingly they probably amounted to 20 per cent more than they ought to; the quality of the cloths thereby deteriorated, because nobody cared whether they were of the right kind or not; if only they arrived in the European settlements before the departure of the ships, they could be sold—if not with a large, then with a small profit—and the seller had his profit in advance. The categories became so confused, that conditions here were almost like those on the North Coast, where thirteen kalls are termed eighteen. Not even the most experienced, who paid great attention to the samples and to the quality of the cloths they bought, were able to find out the actual aurung prices. Samples and musters are therefore gradually being reintroduced, and all business is actually done according to them. In most cases—and whenever it is demanded—the invoices containing the aurung prices, charges merchandize and so forth are, indeed, delivered, but invariably together with musters, at least three pieces from each assortment; then the cloths are examined, an offer is made, and the manner of payment is specified without regard to the accompanying invoice. An answer is then received, and according to that it is resolved what is eventually to be done. Under the present conditions of the country this is the right and the only safe way of procuring good cloths, but in the future ready money—amounting to two-thirds of the sum at the very least—will become indispensable. Few—indeed, very few compared with previous times—will in the future have money to remit. And when nobody has money to remit it will be totally impossible for us to pay for goods with bills of exchange and acquire the goods at the same price as if they were paid for with ready money, however good and safe our bills may be considered. Offering up to 2 shillings 2 pence per current rupee, which is 8⅓ per cent above the ordinary rate of exchange of 2 shillings, will not lower the price proportionately but only introduce a higher rate for ever. (More about that later on.).

It is our opinion, with which the honourable Court of Directors will no doubt agree, that the best and safest way of procuring good wares is to thoroughly examine the cloths and compare them with reliable musters, instead of trusting the accounts and invoices of others, which is only feasible, when business is always done with honest people. In most cases even these honest people are unknowingly and unwillingly deceived by their own employees. So in any case the best thing to do is to keep your eyes open as much as possible.

The money employed in this country in the production or in the aurungs only returns once a year—namely, at the time of the ships' departures, when the goods are sold, which season at most amounts to the four months from November 10 to March 10. The greater part of the sum received in December or January has to be remitted at once to the different districts of the country to be invested in new cloths which in the following autumn will be coming down for sale like the previous cloths. The total sum to be invested in these cloths is not, however, remitted at once, but at different times, depending on many conditions;

it takes place either by bills of exchange on the towns near the weaving district or in silver rupees guarded by trustworthy people and sepoys; generally one-fourth in February, one-fourth in April or May, one-fourth in July, and the remainder after the arrival of the first consignment, which corresponds roughly to half the expected goods. The natives reckon these and all other proportional calculations in the ratio of annas on the rupee. Concerning advances on cloths as well as all other transactions they put it this way: 'this man has remitted five, four or three annas on the rupee.'

The correct weight of a new Spanish dollar has to be 37 annas and the content 33 annas fine silver equivalent—quite correctly—to 14 'lod' 4 32/37 'gren' fine per mark; a new dollar is at most 14 'lod' 5 'gren' fine per mark; and when smaller divisions are necessary 20 gonda per anna is used. Before European dominion one sicca rupee, according to the Bengalis, consisted of pure silver except for 2¼ gonda of lead. That is, in 320 gonda was 317¾ pure silver, which is equivalent to 15 'lod' 15 39/40 'gren' fine per mark. But now—since the English coin rupees—it has been debased up to 6 gonda, although the weight is identical. This is quite correct, for one sicca rupee from the Mint in Calcutta, although very fine, is only 15 'lod' 12 'gren' fine per mark.

The rate of interest on the money in the period of employment—in accordance with the different dates at which money has to be in the districts if good cloths are to be procured—is calculated only at two-thirds and sometimes at three-fourths of the ordinary annual rate of interest of the country, which is reckoned at 12 per cent. This is the reason why only rates of interest from 8 to 10 per cent or at an average 9 per cent are calculated on the capital invested in the cloths when they arrive at the settlements, although the capital is realized only once a year. This way of calculating was previously used also by the Companies and is still in use with the Dutch, who follow the old fashion. When a contract is now entered into at Chinsurah in February or March for a certain quantity of cloths to be delivered by the Company's so-called black merchants during the following November or December, it is always understood that money has to be advanced to them at certain dates; if not, they are paid 9 per cent per annum above the total amount of the contract to be paid the following February or March, which—if the account is paid and finished in December or January—generally amounts to 7 to 8 per cent above the specified price. This is calculated to amount to no more than if the Dutch Company itself had raised money on loan at the ordinary rate of interest of the country in order to pay the merchants the stipulated advances at the different dates. It is easily understood that calculations of this sort—made upon an average of many years observations—are not always the most accurate, although they come very near to the truth. The black merchants are very well satisfied with this calcuation as long as they can rely upon sale and payment in ready money at the right time. They have money invested in this trade all year round and employ gomastas and servants

on the spot who know, better than any European, the right time to strike a profitable bargain and who, therefore, seldom invest money such a long time in advance, thereby losing 7 to 8 per cent in rates of interest. The English, and Europeans in general, who—at an interest of 1 per cent per month—have their money remitted through the agency houses in Calcutta to the districts where it is to be invested in cloths, always calculate costs of 10 per cent on the capital invested in the cloths when these are sold in December or January. Furthermore, they have to pay godown hire for some months, some pieces of cloth have to be rewashed, others are rejected and have to be sold later at the best price possible and generally at a loss, and 2½ per cent are due to the agency house which sells the cloths. An honest merchant who sells his cloths with a profit of only 20 per cent on their real costs—not included charges merchandize—hardly earns 4 to 5 per cent and generally less. And if the cloths are not sold that year, either for Europe or for trade in India, which is not infrequently the case, then they are bound to inflict a loss. Experienced people, not only Europeans but Armenians and natives as well, admit that when a man invests his capital in the cloth trade from the weaving districts—that is, when he has some experience himself and knows how to select the people required and employ them in such a manner that their expenses are kept at a proper level and when eventually he gives an accurate and correct account of his costs on the cloths in the aurung ready to be sent down—then he ought to have a profit of 25 per cent in Calcutta (not including all costs of transport and customs), if he is to earn a suitable profit. If he is unlucky and the goods are not sold but have to remain till the following year, a manifest loss is always inflicted because of interest, godown hire, and other expenses—however advantageously they might be sold.

In our opinion we have by now made clear what is understood in Bengal by advances for cloths, what is understood by aurung prices, and what is called by Europeans to sell with a profit of 20 and 25 per cent on the aurung prices, and what is further relevant in this connection.

This example, which is taken from Birbhum cloths, is founded on much information and calculation collected not only from Europeans but also from natives who have for many years invested in and carried on trade with Birbhum gurrahs. The greater part of the more important changes has been referred to as well, in accordance with conditions and time, and the information is so near to the truth as possible. We have chosen this district because your honourable Court are acquainted with it yourselves and know what is understood by good gurrah yarn, and because these cloths are the least varied of all sorts of Bengal piece goods, as they are only divided into three main categories. Every category is further divided into A, B, and C; the difference between them is generally calculated at half a rupee per piece, although these divisions are sometimes mixed together as well. Concerning all other Bengal piece goods, however, especially from the districts where both fine and coarse cloths are made and where one

seer of cotton yarn (17/8 pound or rather 1 pound 273/5 'lod' which might cost 12 to 13 annas in Birbhum) is spun so differently that prices range from 3 to 14 rupees and more—in such cases all explanation concerning the yarn as well as the cloth is useless. For we cannot call them by other names than good, fine, and superfine, which is right and, therefore, quite correct at any time whether the thread which the weaver uses costs him 8 or 16 rupees per seer. A sample of thread and cloth would always have to follow the explanation, and even then variations, caused by time and circumstances, could not be made sufficiently intelligible. For fine cloths the weavers always need advances and more careful supervision than with coarse cloths. The loss if he dies or runs away is more considerable, and despite all vigilance the fine cloths have generally deteriorated more than the coarse ones. Genuine pieces might only be acquired when no advances are saved and when many more per cent are paid than is reasonable. The pieces themselves are often of different quality in the middle and in the endings. The weft does not correspond to the warp. The threads do not look square and seldom meet at right angles. The colour is not so pretty or so white as it ought to be, and when it is further added that the pieces do not correspond to the weight—that is, the right weight which every piece of cloth of every sort ought to have according to the quality of the thread and to the reed or the weaving comb in which the yarn was made, which experienced dalals are very able to ascertain—then you have a description of the fine cloths in most places in this country, cloths which lack some of the four characteristics always demanded to produce a good piece, either fine or coarse. All over Bengal these miserable times, when 2½ to 3 rupees and more are to be paid for the quantity of rice which formerly cost one rupee at most, have so oppressed the poor working people, that the weavers in Birbhum and other districts have to unite, two and three together; and even then they cannot pay for the yarn for a single piece of good cloth, but are forced to buy one seer after the other as they progress with their work on the cloth. Advances are paid, but only in small sums, for fear that they shall spend the money on food and deliver no cloths or run away to some other place. A peon is, therefore, often sent who stands over the poor creature and supervises the work; when it is eventually finished and delivered, the piece is at most of a very mediocre quality and of uneven yard. Such are the pieces which are now and then brought to the weekly market or which the gomasta receives for his advances; and when, furthermore, the servants of the English Company employ the weavers, others can have practically no cloths except their rejects, besides what the weavers might manage to sell secretly. Conditions are reported to be much better in the so-called up-country aurungs. The demand of the Europeans for a greater quantity of these cloths as compared with previous times has considerably raised the prices in these aurungs, especially in the Tandah district; nor have the times up there been so miserable as here in Bengal. A better crop of cotton is expected this year, and the good rainy season has already

considerably lowered the price on rice so that a good harvest as well as better times are to be expected.

The native merchant calculates the costs of transporting his gurrahs from Birbhum to this place in the following manner: The way is 40 coss (20 Danish miles) and sometimes somewhat more, depending on the distance of the place. One bullock or ox carries two bales each containing 20 pieces of gurrah, and one man or driver is needed per four or, at the most, five bullocks. In the best season it takes 8 to 10 days, and in the worst season, when the road is very slippery, the surface soft, and there is water everywhere, a full fortnight might be necessary. Two sicca rupees per bullock are generally paid for the whole distance—when it is reckoned to be made in 10 days—but more during other and worse seasons. One man with five bullocks generally earns 10 sicca rupees in 10 days, and these five bullocks carry 200 pieces or 10 corge of cloths. Costs of transportation are thus calculated at one rupee per corge or 20 pieces. As one or two men, however, have to accompany them to look after and drive them, this—together with the difficulties of the road because of the season—is generally calculated at 1¼ rupee for the transport of 20 pieces to this settlement, which—added to the original costs of the cloths—makes a total of 78 rupees 14 annas to 79 sicca rupees per 20 pieces of gurrah. Like the European the Bengali further calculates with 20 to 25 per cent on his prime costs. These cloths ought, therefore, to make about 95 sicca rupees per corge if he is to be reimbursed for his capital with interest and for the loss included in the cloth trade.

In such a loss are included: rewashing of some of the goods, the outermost twentieth piece of the bale which cover the other 19 pieces is always rewashed and is generally damaged as well, and the bullock often tumbles into a hole or a morass with its entire load whereby the cloths are damaged. The washing costs 1½ anna per piece, godown hire for some months should be added; and when the cloths are eventually sold the owner is glad if they are good enough and match the musters so well, that four-fifths, or rather 16 to 17 pieces out of 20, are accepted. With good reason he calculates his sales price—upon which he makes his gain—on only four-fifths or in very few cases nine-tenths of the quantity. The remainder of the cloths are either full of holes or of a very inferior quality with which his gomasta or his people in the aurungs have been deceived, so that they can be used only for packing cloth and are worth the prime costs or about 4 rupees at most. 25 per cent on a quantity of cloths conforming to the musters—generally reduced to four-fifths after the examination—are therefore actually no more than 20 per cent.

Generally, though not always, the black merchants use a dalal to sell the goods. He gets 3 to 4 sets of musters which he delivers at the different settlements, where he makes as extensive investigations as possible about the situation of the buyers and how they pay. His dustoree or customade on the sale of the goods is one rupee per corge, at most 4 gonda on the rupee, calculated at 320 gonda. Usually he is allowed to pay the same sum to the buyer's sircar or black

head servant—and sometimes more—especially if he might induce him to have his cloths examined soon and the sum quickly paid in ready money. As mentioned before, the dalal's or broker's dustoree is half an anna on every rupee, which is called full customade. This means that the gomasta or the head sircar allows his employed dalals that much on the entire trade, because he obliges himself to remit the whole amount in goods in one year, and because at the same time he is responsible for outstanding debts. This does not mean that he pays his dalals this full customade, and furthermore, he generally has some outstanding debts among the weavers, which are to be paid the following year in cloths; these debts increase, however, and are eventually totally lost.

When dalals are employed in this settlement, dustoree is given according to mutual agreement and varies, according to the total amount, between one-third and generally only one-fourth of the full customade, which then amounts to 3 1/3 gonda on 320 and less in trade with dollars or ready money. Under normal conditions the Bengali often calculates his gain in the following manner: the piece goods together with transport cost him, say, 80 rupees per corge; the interest at 12 per cent per annum, calculated at the ratio and for the time in which the capital is invested in cloths, amounts to only 8 per cent per annum; as the cloths will be sold that same year, no more should be added; nevertheless, godown hire for some months, some rewashing, and other small expenses should be calculated at 2 per cent, which in all amount to 10 per cent. 88 rupees will reimburse him for his total capital, and interest as well, so that he will not loose anything at that price—provided all his cloths pass a thorough examination. This is, however, seldom the case—and more so than when the cloths are delivered by Europeans. For his people in the aurungs try to strike advantageous bargains. For fear of not being able to fulfill their orders and for fear that they shall not be employed the following year, they take what they can get, even of inferior cloths, in order to spend their total capital. It is, therefore, generally to be observed that the first consignment of cloths arriving in the settlement after the river has been filled is better than the last one. Your honourable Court have probably heard about that and more of the same kind without having been told the reason for it.

The cloths washed during or shortly after the rainy season look better than those washed at other times because of the constant alternations between rain and the hot, bleaching sun. (The rainy season is said to last from the beginning of June to September, but it often rains considerably in October, too). In that case cloths—and especially fine cloths—which arrive in the settlements from August to November and December are preferred. The cloths which arrive after that period and until the middle of February are, however, of equally good quality and sometimes better, which is often the case with up-country goods. Because, however, that it is common knowledge that the servants in the aurungs have to finish their accounts and that they eventually accept from the weavers cloths of a very mediocre quality in payment for fear of having large outstanding debts,—because

this takes place often, it is generally supposed to take place always. This is often the case with the employees of the native merchants, but not so often with the gomastas employed by Europeans, who always demand good cloths. More than the others they dare have outstanding debts among the weavers, and as they are generally constantly residing in the aurungs, the money will return as cloths during the following months.

The native merchant calculates his gain in annas and fractions of annas on the rupee on the basis of his total costs, and if he is not fully reimbursed he does not sell at all unless driven by the utmost necessity. He wouldn't act hastily until he had made inquiries everywhere—unless driven by the abovementioned necessity or tempted by the dear silver rupees. At the same time he is perfectly well aware that Europeans, if they buy his cloths, will only accept a certain price in accordance with the musters, and he has, therefore, to pay both his own dalals and the buyer's sircar a small customade as well. He must, therefore, have 94 to 95 rupees per corge for his cloths, if he is to have one anna on the rupee in clear gain above the interest on his money. By carrying on their trade themselves in the aurungs, by investing their money there at the most advantageous times, by employing clever dalals, but still more by cutting down their charges as compared with the European merchants who carry on trade in cloth under their own personal supervision or through the management of others, the native merchants are generally able to sell their different cloths a few rupees per corge below the European agency houses. Among their cloths, however, more pieces of mixed and inferior quality are generally found than among those of the others, and accordingly a thorough examination is always necessary. In every quantity of cloth good merchandize is divided into A, B, and C with a difference of 4 to 5 per cent between each letter, yet to be more precisely determined according to the given musters. The bargain is made and calculated on the basis of B, and the English generally buy per 100 pieces: A 25, B 35, and C 40, which is based on and identical with the Bengalis' proportion in the corge, that is: 5 pieces of A, 7 pieces of B, and 8 pieces of C. When dealing with black merchants one-third of each letter is generally demanded, but if C is not inferior to the musters, and if several of the pieces of A are actually superior to the musters, which is generally the case, one is not so particular about it. It is hardly necessary to observe that many small and choice lots are only divided into two letters, sometimes only into A and A plus, in proportion to other pieces of the same category bought at the same time. Among fine goods four letters are more frequent and among silk goods more letters still.

It is impossible, without being a bit long-winded, to give as exhaustive and accurate a description of the Bengal piece goods production and trade as the changing situation itself demands. We nevertheless trust to earn the approval of the honourable Court of Directors by this account of these goods and the trade in them, which we have started this year and which we intend not only to con-

tinue in the future but even to extend to other aspects of the economic and political situation as well as the present actual conditions of Bengal."

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2. The General Letter of August 7, 1789 from the Serampore factory to the Court of Directors, containing the report, is to be found in the archives of the Asiatic Company in Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, inventory 190 no. 219: Letters Received From Bengal. The first and the last section of the General Letter, dealing with routine matters, are omitted here. In connection with the translation from Danish to English the punctuation has been modernized and the somewhat haphazard spelling of Indian terms has been normalized in accordance with N. K. Sinha: The Economic History of Bengal, I. Calcutta 1961.

Ole Feldbaek

Early Career of Siraj-ud-daulah

Alivardi had no sons of his own. Of his three daughters, the eldest Mihir-un-nisā (Ghasiti Begam) and the third, Āminā Begam, were married to his nephews (sons of his elder brother Hāji Ahmad) Nawāzish Muhammad Shahmat Jang and Zainuddin Ahmad Haibat Jang respectively. Some mention, probably on the authority of Stewart, that his another daughter was married to his nephew Saulat Jang, Governor of Purnea. Mirzā Muhammad Sirāj-ud-daulah was the son of Āminā Begam, who had another son named Mirzā Mahdi. Sirāj-ud-daulah was born a few days before Alivardi's appointment as the Deputy Governor of Bihār in 1733. Birth of Sirāj-ud-daulah being synchronous with Alivardi's elevation to this high post made him an object of special favour and affection of his grand-father, who in fact lived and moved and had his being in him. Ghulām Husain, the author of *Siyar-ul-mutakherin,* notes Alivardi "had him (Siraj-ud-daulah) educated in his house".[1] Karam Ali, the author of *Muzaffarnāmah,*[2] writes: "As Alivardi had given his heart to Siraj-ud-daulah from the day of his birth and never kept him apart from himself, but tried to teach him the art of government and administration and all the noble traits that befit a ruler of men, so much, so, that every misdeed done by Siraj was treated by Alivardi as he had not seen it or heard of it. Every thorn that he imagined in the path of Siraj transfixed his own living heart, and he considered it his duty to remove it. He could not pass a single moment without thinking of Sirāj". But all this does not seem to have produced a very wholesome effect. Sirāj-ud-daulah's education may have been of the usual formal type, marked by rudiments of ordinary knowledge and not well calculated to foster higher virtues. Due to excessive dotage of the old grand-father the boy naturally developed unruly impulses and obstinacy. There *may* not have been dearth of sychophants, who out of their personal interests flattered him and pandered to his low tastes.[3] He occasionally committed thoughtless acts in his early years. But Alivardi did not mind all these and humoured him in various ways. Thus when be was making some changes in the administration after seizing the *masnad of Bengal,* he nominally bestowed the superintendentship of the State fleet at Dacca on Sirāj-ud-daulah. Sirāj-ud-daulah's brother Mirzā Kāzim, who had been adopted by Nawāzish Muhammad as his son and designated Ekrām-ud-daulah was invested with a similar command over the army at Dacca. Sirāj-ud-daulah was kept in his company even during military campaigns. Thus the latter was with his grand-father during his Orissā campaign in 1740-41. In the short respite after repeated campaignings against the Marāthas, Alivardi celebrated Sirāj-ud-daulah's marriage at the commencement of the rainy season in 1746, amidst much pomp and magnificence, with a daughter of Mirzā Iraz Khān.[4]

In the year 1748 Alivardi was faced with a critical situation due to the second Afghān insurrection in Bihār in which the Marathas had joined with the Afghans and which was a greater calamity for him than the first Afghān insurrection of 1745. The body of Zainuddin, Alivardi's nephew and Deputy Governor of Bihār, was cut into two pieces by Murad Sher, one of the Afghāns, with a violent blow of his sword. His limbs were cut into pieces and buried in a plot of land, now known as *Maqberā-ā-Haibat Jang* in the Begampur *Mahallā* of Patna city. The Afghān insurgents also tortured the Nawāb's brother, Hāji Ahmad, to death on the 30th of January, 1748. As a matter of fact, Patna was usurped by the Afghāns for full three months and the local people had to pass their days and nights in extreme agony and fear.

These mishaps at first overwhelmed Alivardi with intense grief and despondency. But he soon screwed up his courage and decided upon taking the bold course of marching to Patna to recover it, to rescue his surviving relatives who were prisoners in the hands of the Afghans and to avenge the death of his two near relatives. With necessary precautions Alivardi left his camp at Amāniganj near Murshidābād for Patna on the 29th February, 1748, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the allied Afghāns and Marāthas on the 16th April at the battle of Rānisarai or Rānichock, eight miles west of Barh. Alivardi remained at Patna for six months to arrange for Bihār administration. Probably as sop to Sirāj-ud-daulah's sentiment, the Nawāb appointed him nominal Deputy Governor of Bihār with Rājah Jānkirām as his deputy and leaving Patna on the 6th November returned to Murshidābād on the 30th November, 1748, with Sayeed Ahmad Khān (one of his nephews) and Sirāj-ud-daulah. In December 1749, the Nawāb proceeded to Midnāpur and sent a detachment under Sirāj-ud-daulah to Bālāsore to drive out the Marāthas. Unable to bear long separation from his grandson, Alivardi went personally to Nārāingarh to see him. Both soon returned to their camp at Midnāpur. Alivardi chased the Marāthas from place to place and wanted to stay at Midnāpur for some time to make proper arrangement for administration of that area.

But an unexpected danger soon compelled the Nawāb to alter his plan. Mahdi Nisār Khan, a dismissed and discontented general of the Nawāb, instigated Sirāj-ud-daulah to make an attempt to become the independent governor of Bihār after removing the Nawab's agent Jānkirām.[5] To give effect to this design the capricious youth left Midnāpur under the pretext of visiting the palaces at Murshidābād. He started from the capital city with his Begam Lutfunissā, joined Mahdi Nisar Khān at Jāfar Khān's garden (just east of Patna city) and attacked Patna city. Jānkirām found himself in a fix. He could not leave the city undefended, but at the same time he apprehended that any injury to Sirāj-ud-daulah would deeply wound the feelings of his grand-father. His troops bravely opposed the assilants, but were driven back in an encounter with them at the Hājiganj *Mahallā* (quarter) of Patna city. The capture of the entire city was, however,

prevented by them, and the leaders of the insurrection, named Mahdi Nisar Khān, Mirzā Mādāri Beg Deccani, and Amānat Khān were killed in course of the fighting. This disconcerted the other followers of Sirāj-ud-daulah, who ran out of the city. Sirāj-ud-daulah himself found a safe protection in the house of Mustafā Quli Khān, brother of his father-in-law Muhammad Iraj Khān.

Alivardi had left Midnāpur immediately on hearing of Sirāj-ud-daulah's march from Murshidābād to Patna. He halted at Murshidābād only for one day and marched quickly to Bihār. On arriving at Ghiyaspur near Barh he learnt all that had hapened. He hastened to Patna and effected a reconciliation between Jānkiraām ānd Sirāj-ud-daulah. Jānkiram governed Bihār efficiently[6] till his death in 1752.

Early in May 1752 Alivardi declared Sirāj-ud-daulah as his successor on the *masnad* of Bengal. Naturally the European trading companies in Bengal thought it advisable to compliment him on an occasion like this. In that year, during Sirāj-ud-daulah's stay at Hugli, he "was visited by the French and Dutch Governors with a present equivalent to his dignity". As suggested by the *Faujdār* of Hugli and by Khwajah Wājid, one of the principal merchants of Bengal who resided at Hugli, the Council in Calcutta "judged it highly necessary to pay the Nabob (Nawāb) the compliment required". Accordingly, the President, Roger Drake, accompanied by Cruttenden, Becher and the Commandant, visited Sirāj-ud-daulah at Hugli in the beginning of the third week of September 1752. They were received there, as the Council in Calcutta expressed, "with the utmost politeness and distinction far superior than was paid the French or the Dutch". Appreciating this cordiality of Sirāj-ud-daulah, the Court of Directors observed in their letter to the Council in Calcutta, dated 23 January, 1754, that they should lose no opportunity of "improving the favourable opinion he seems to entertain of the English nation". In another letter, dated 29 November, 1754, the Court significantly noted that the "Country Government" (Nawab's Government) had "always shown more preferable marks of favour to the English than to the other European nations".

A number of bereavements during the closing years of Alivardi's career caused severe depression in his mind and badly affected his health, which had been very much strained due to his incessant battling against various odds throughout the greater part of his regime. Ekrām-ud-daulah, younger brother of Sirāj-ud-daulah, whom Shāhmat Jang had brought up with care as an adopted son, died of small pox in 1752. Overwhelmed with grief at this Shāhmat Jang also died from an attack of dropsy on the 17th December, 1755. According to his desire, he was buried by the side of Ekrām-ud-daulah in the *Motijhil* garden, a few miles north of the city of Murshidābād. To add to agonies of Alivardi, Saulat Jang, his another nephew and Governor of Purnea since 1749, also left this world on the 26th February, 1756. His body was buried in the *Jafari Bagh*, a pleasant garden in Purnea. All these bereavements told seriously on the health of the old Nawab

and he expired on the 9th or 10th April, 1756, at the age of eighty. His body was buried at the foot of his mother's grave at *Khushbag* on the west bank of the Bhāgirathi opposite *Motijhil*. Feeling that his end was drawing near he had summoned Sirāj-ud-daulah before him on the eve of his death and addressed him thus:

> "My darling! strength of youth has given place to weakness of old age and the inevitable death is near. Through the grace of God, I have carved out a very rich dominion for you. Now my last words to you are that you should strive for the suppression of the enemies (of the province) and elevation of the friends, and that you should devote yourself to securing the well-being of your subjects by removing all evils and disorders. Union brings forth prosperity and disunion begets misery; your government will be stable if its foundation is laid on the goodwill of the people. Follow my footsteps so that your enemies may do you no harm so long as you live. If you take to ways of malice and hostility, the garden of prosperity will wither away."

Luke Scrafton, who was associated with Bengal affairs, in those days, significantly writes: "I have before mentioned Surajah Dowla (Sirāj-ud-daulah), as given to hard drinking; but Allyvherde (Aliverdi) in his last illness, foreseeing the ill consequences of his excesses, obliged him to swear on the Korān, never more to touch any intoxicating liquor which he ever after strictly observed".[7]

Alivardi was an able ruler and he was particular about maintaining strict control over the European trading companies in Bengal. But he never wanted their complete extermination which he rightly realised would have been prejudicial to the economic interests of the *subah*.

Within a few days after the death of Alivardi his heir-designate assumed the reins of government (15th April). President Drake wrote a "letter of congratulation to Sirāj-ud-daulah on this occasion, and desired his favour and protection to the English company, which was received very kindly", and he promised to the Company's *Vakil* that "he would show the English greater marks of friendship and esteem han this grand-father had done".[8] But Bengal *masnad* did not prove to be a bed of roses for Sirāj-ud-daulah. His nomination as the successor of Alivardi caused jealousy of his rival kinsmen, who carried on machinations with the help of their shrewd and intriguing partisans, chiefly by Rājāh Rājballabh, who was naturally suspected by Sirāj-ud-daulah to be the leader of the party of opposition. In fact, Rājballabh incited Saukat Jang of Purnea to contest the succession of Sirāj-ud-daulah and he tried to enlist English support for his move. Sirāj-ud-daulah had also to reckon with the hostile attitude of Mir Jāfar Khān, who owed fortune and high position as Commander-in-Chief of the army to Alivardi, but was devoid of any feeling of gratitude. Apprehending serious opposition from Ghasiti Begam (eldest sister of Sirāj-ud-daulah's mother), Sirāj-ud-daulah sought to bring her immediately under control. Ghasiti Begam was living at *Motijhil* with her immense wealth and a well-equipped army[9] prepared to fight

against Sirāj-ud-daulah. But two days after the siege of *Motijhil* by Sirāj-ud-daulah most of them fled away. According to the author of *Muzaffarnāmah* "none remained there except Mir Nazar Ali the Khānsamah, Rājballabh the Diwān, Hāji Mahdi the *Ārzbegi*" and Ali Naqi Khān, the son of Akbar Ali Khān.[10] Sirāj-ud-daulah seized hoarded wealth of *Motijhil* palace-jewels, four crores of rupees and forty lakhs of *mohars* in cash and vessels of gold and silver worth one crore of rupees belonging to Ghasiti Began and Nafisā Begam, daughter of Nawab Shuja-ud-din. All the confiscated wealth of Ghasiti Begam was deposited in the state treasury. Nafisā Begam was sent to Dacca along with Sukrulla Khan, alias Aga Baba, son of Nawāb Sarfarāz. Mir Nazar Ali also soon fled away and was permitted by Sirāj-ud-daulah to proceed towards Karmanāsa. Ghasiti Begam was placed in confinement.

Why did the soldiers and followers of Ghasiti Begam run away precipitately without offering any resistance to the army of Siirāj-ud-daulah? Yusuf Ali, a contemporary writer, explains it in the following words: "Since people's feelings had been hurt by her bad behaviour and shameful conduct and they realised that Siraj-ud-daulah was firmly in control of the government and were won over by inducements and friendly expression used by him, they detached themselves from the party of Ghasiti Begam and joined him."[11] Ghulām Husain the author of *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*, comments that this "short-sighted woman" received "just retribution" for "having been guilty of an infinity of infamous actions with which she had dishonoured her character and family".[12]

Sirāj-ud-daulah soon appointed some officers from among his own partisans. Mir Jāfar, whose loyalty was doubtful, was removed from the post of *Bakshi* (Supreme Commander of the Army) and it was given to the brave and faithful Mir Madan. Mohan Lāl Kāshmiri, another loyal and capable officer, enjoyed his confidence and was made *Peshkār* of his *diwānkhānā* with the title of *Mahārājah*. Mohan Lāl became so influential as to act almost like the Prime Minister with "full power over every branch of administration."[13]

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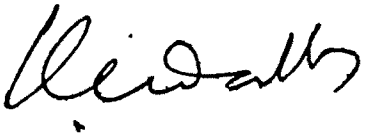
1. Stewart, History of Bengal, p. 508.
2. *Siyar-ul-nutakherin* by Ghulām Husain, a detailed and highly valuable history of India from 1707 to 1780, written by a contemporary, who had intimate knowledge of the events of the time.
3. *Muzaffarnāmah*, f. 41a and f. 42a. *Muzaffarnāmah* by Karam Ali. A detailed history of the Bengal Subah from 1722—1772. Karam Ali was born at Murshidābād in the mansion of Alivardi on the 31st October, 1736. In 1748 he was appointed *faujdār* of Ghorā-ghat and held this post till the death of Alivardi in 1756. He was with Nawāb Shaukat Jang of Purnea at the time of his fall in October, 1756, but somewhat escaped Sirāj-ud-daulah's wrath. Subsequently he took shelter at Patna. He was employed under Muhammad Rezā Khan, also called Muzaffar Jang, and notes that the present work was written by him in 1772 after the fall of Muhammad Rezā Khan from power.

4. *Siyar*, Vol. II, p. 17.
5. *Siyar*, Vol. II, pp. 583-88; *Muzaffarnāmah*, fs. 82B-83A, Yusuf, fs. 103-07. *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang* or *Tārikh-i-Mahabat Jang* by Yusuf Ali. In this work we get a detailed history of the Bengal Subah during the mid-eighteenth century. The author, an witness of the political ev.nts of Bengal since the time of Sarfarāz Khān, mentions many new facts and dates, which are not found in any other contemporary work.
6. *Muzaffarnāmah*, f. 80A.
7. Scrafton, *Reflections on the Government of India.*
8. Evidence of John Cooke quoted in Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, p. 290.
9. 10,000 according to Orme, II, p. 50; 20,000 according to Cooke, Hill, I, p. 249; 7000 or 8000 according to a British Museum Manuscript, Hill, III, p. 217; 5000 to 6000 according to *Muzaffarnamah*, p. 51a.
10. F. 51a-b.
11. *Yusuf Ali*, f. 90a.
12. *Siyar*, II, p. 186.
13. *Siyar*, II, p. 186.



The Crisis at Surat, 1730-32

The decline of Surat began somewhat imperceptibly in the twenties of the eighteenth century. The thirties, however, proved to be a decade of disasters. And the city was in ruins by the middle of the century.[1] The prosperity of the port had, in the main, been due to the commerce carried on by traditional groups of local traders. In these years the Bohras were probably the most affluent among them if only because of the importance of their leading figure Mohammed Ali.

After the death of his father Abdul Gafar in 1716, Mohammad Ali had inherited a very considerable property and through vigorous pursuit of commerce had soon become, in the words of a caustic critic, 'the greatest merchant that ever lived'.[2] The leader among the Banias was Seth Laldas Vitaldas whose family had been connected with the English for three generations.[3] Ahmad Chellaby was the most prosperous among the group of a locally settled community of Turks. Next to Mohammad Ali, he was the largest shipowner at Surat.[4] The Parsi community was distracted by factional squabbles after the death of their grand old man Rustumjee Monackjee in 1711.[5] Apart from these major groups there were other Muslim shipowners, as also the ubiquitous Armenians and Khatris from the Punjab and Sind. These men had inherited a proud tradition and were jealously guarding their trading connections, especially with the Red Sea area. They had been competing with the Europeans for this trade for about a hundred years. Gradually the fight had been going against them, but by the early twenties of the eighteenth century they still retained much of this commerce.[6] Within a matter of three decades, however, these millionaires of the city of Surat had been wiped out and the commerce of the region had come to centre on Bombay. This remarkable reversal in fortune was brought about not by any external agency but by the general crisis which was steadily undermining the Indian Empire. In Surat it took the shape of a straight political attack on mercantile property. Local aristocrats, deprived of their subsistence by the Marathas and denied any Imperial assistance, turned to squeezing the prosperous merchants. For one glorious moment the city rallied to the support of its mercantile community and a general revolt drove out one particularly odious local tyrant. But fundamentally the situation did not change, and faced with a mounting pressure the merchants gradually gave way. This in brief is the story of the decline of Surat. In this paper we shall be concerned with the two years in the thirties which saw the revolt of the merchants and the eventual fall of the great merchant Mohammad Ali.

In the year 1730, three different noblemen had their sights trained on Surat. Sorab Ali Khan was in actual control of the town, but neither he nor anybody

else knew how long he would last. Mustapha Khan had recently obtained an imperial *sanad* to become the *mutasaddi* of Surat and was slowly approaching the town in the train of Maharaja Abhay Singh of Jodhpur, who had become the Subahdar of Ahmadabad. Teg Bakht Khan the nephew of the Killadar of Surat had held the town for some time in the twenties and was ever ready to do so again. He lived with his uncle Begler Khan in the castle and was a man of great influence if not of great spirit. A great deal of money was being spent at the Imperial Court by the three men and the issuing of one *sanad* only encouraged further spending for the next. At a lower level other aristocrats were jockeying for position. In the entourage of Sorab Khan, for example, the Dewan Krishnadas was hard put to it to maintain his position against his enemies Sayad Wali and Mir Abdul Rahim, two commanders of some local repute. None of these men, however, had any source of income or at best only doubtful ones. The revenues to maintain the *mutasaddi* and his establishment were to come from the twenty-eight villages attached to the city. These had all been overrun by the Marathas for several years and in fact it was difficult to keep the Bargi bands off the walls of the City.[7] Sorab Khan, the actual governor of Surat, was naturally and heavily in debt to the most prosperous merchant in the city, Mohammad Ali, and was continuously borrowing from him as well as from Seth Laldas and Seth Dayaram, the broker for the Dutch East India Company. In attempting to meet his obligations he had been compelled to assign part of the customs of the port of Surat to Mohammad Ali, who collected it through his own Dewan Manikchand.[8] But Sorab's thoughts had already turned to other ways of earning a livelihood. In 1729 when he asked for a general contribution from the merchants, Haji Ahmad Chellaby had induced the traders to desert their dwellings and shops to retire within the protection of the castle. Mohammad Ali had intervened and settled the dispute when it threatened to turn ugly.[9] But matters did not improve and in fact as the year wore on new difficulties appeared.

Sorab Khan, or more accurately his Dewan, had refused to come to an agreement with the Marathas about their demand for *chauth* and as a result they cut off all supplies to the town in the closing days of 1729. Soon Surat was in dire straits. On 2 February 1730, Mohammad Ali, along with the Kazi, the Mufti and Syad Ali, a local religious leader, called on Sorab Khan. They pointed out that the price of food, straw and common fuel (like wood) had risen to 'unheard of heights', that ordinary people were undergoing great hardship, and they appealed to Sorab to do something about it. They threatened to close all *masjids* in town if nothing was done. Sorab Khan pointed out that one had to be patient when negotiating with the Marathas and appealed to all Indian merchants to import whatever grain they could from the ports of Sind. He was kind enough to free such imports from duty.[10] Mohammad Ali paid a second visit to Sorab Khan with similar complaints exactly a month later. This time he was accompanied by the Kazi, Seth Laldas and another prominent merchant, Seth Tapidas. The

governor told them to negotiate peace with the Marathas on whatever terms they could obtain.[11] As a result of these negotiations a compromise was reached with the Marathas early in March and grain began to trickle into Surat again.[12]

Mohammad Ali, who was a benefactor on these occasions, occupied a peculiar position in the affairs of the town. He was by far the most prosperous merchant. He had inherited from his father a garden-house to the north of the city, a somewhat mouldy residence in the town itself, and a wharf to the south of it. He had then concentrated on the development of the southern property and gradually, by acquiring more land round about the wharf and building on it, he had transformed the old landing place into an impressive suburban complex. In fact, with its fortified points and everything else it looked much 'like a new Surat.'[13] In February 1730, he received Imperial permission further to expand his defensive works and to run a personal mint for making copper coins.[14] On 4 March 1730, a day regarded locally as lucky, he struck the first coins in his mint.[15] In spite of occasional difficulties, like the mysterious fire in three of his best warehouses which destroyed property worth Rs 70,000, his business was going very well. He had undertaken a serious drive to establish a monopoly in the trade to the Red Sea and seemed, with his influence at Mocha, likely to succeed in it.[16]

But this astonishing success had brought its own problems. He was one of the merchants and at the same time the largest creditor to the government. The governor was heavily dependent on Mohammad Ali to sustain his own position at the Imperial Court. But Ali was worried about the amount of debts Sorab Khan had already run up and was becoming more and more difficult about new loans. It was commonly suspected that he was behind many of the oppressive measures that the governor was thinking up. He was thought to be running with the hounds but the fact remained that to the ruling class he was a potential victim.[17] In his own way he was concerned for the welfare of the town, but unfortunately for everybody concerned, the town did not believe it.

He had in fact made a large number of enemies at Surat. A deadly feud existed between his family and the Chellabys. Ahmad Chellaby was one of the competitors he wished to run out of the Mochan trade. He was certainly not friendly with the African Sidis who were a powerful group both in the trade and politics of Surat. Henry Lowther, the chief of the English factory, was only too happy to do him any damage. In August 1731 he brought about an understanding among all Europeans at Surat to refuse passes to Mohammad Ali's vessels. Four months later when Ali took it into his head to draw up a charge sheet against the Dutch Directeur Phoonsen, preparatory to sending it to Batavia, Lowther obtained a copy of the document and thoughtfully passed it on to the Dutch factory.[18] His wealth, his ambitions and his pride prevented this great Borah merchant from making common cause with the other merchants as the crisis took shape in Surat.

Once it was clear to Sorab Ali Khan that his revenues were not enough to go round among his courtiers, his soldiers and his insatiable *vakil* in Delhi, he began to look for a supply of ready cash among the merchants in the town. On 4 January 1730 he fetched Rs. 22,000/- in unminted bullion from the shroffs of the mint by force.[19] On 21 March following Rajaram, a Khatri merchant, was fined Rs. 700/-, but was not told what his fault was.[20] On 12 April 1730 the governor called the merchants from Multan and Lahore to the *Darbar* and asked for a loan of two lakhs of rupees. These rather simple-minded folk pointed out that they came to Surat in order to make money and not to give it away. To the surprise of the town they were allowed to return home unmolested.[21] Two days later the Dutch diarist noted: 'Once more a frivolous pretext from our governor to obtain some money. He asked all insurers and negotiators of respondentia [*assuradeurs en negotianten op bodemarij ter zee*] to produce their books, which they refused. They were then arrested along with the leading shroff [*wisselaer*, lit. money-changer], Dada Parak [the diarist noted the name as 'Dadaparck'] because he pleaded inability to furnish a loan of one lakh of rupees in the form of a bill of exchange to be sent to the Court. On this being known all the leading shroffs have closed their books and shut up their shops.'[22] In a week's time there was a general stoppage of business. The diarist noted that the governor was greatly embarrassed for money because the purse of Mohammad Ali was now virtually closed to him, as he was unable to discharge the accumulated debts to this man. But this general strike [*staking der negotie*] would, the diarist thought, have a salutary effect on him.[23] Dada Parak obtained his liberty on 18 April 1730 without spending any money. The governor, according to the diarist, saw that he could not obtain anything from Dada without force 'which at present he dare not use while the leading men in town are united and undoubtedly prepared to fall upon him.'[24] In fact he was obliged to let the merchants start their business again with strong assurances of future good conduct.[25] But 'good conduct' of the kind the merchants desired was an impossibility under the circumstances. Soon enough Sorab Ali was back at his tricks. On 10 May 1730, when the Armenian merchant Khoja Saffer died, he sent men to seal up all Saffer's property.[26] Then he did something which impressed even this blasé imperial city. He fined a Muslim merchant Rs. 6,000/- for having relations with 'girls of pleasure'. The diarist noted sadly that he was 'going from bad to worse.'[27] He followed this up by fining a Borah merchant Rs. 1,700/- for dishonest dealings, and again turned his attention to the shroffs many of whom retired from the town.[28] He also took to farming out whatever offices he could in the town for exorbitant sums, all of which, of course, ultimately were paid by the citizens. It was in fact believed in the town that the governor had recently poisoned one of his principal officers in order to sell his office.[29] Seth Laldas, Dayaram and several other merchants warned Sorab Ali in open *darbar* that if he did not mend his ways many of them would be compelled to leave the town and settle in a place 'where a gentler civil administra-

tion was to be found.' In this ominous way, with occasional tragedies, things drifted till June 1732.[30]

In the meanwhile two things happened of major significance. In the first place, Gujarat had a famine in 1731-2, and secondly, Mohammad Ali fell out with Sorab Ali Khan. The failure of the rains in 1731 had of course no causal connection with what followed, but its deadly consequences did seem to set the stage for the desperate actions of the following year. The population in the town was increasing rapidly at the time as refugees from the Maratha bands streamed in. The diarist noted a sharp rise in the price of grain in Surat towards the close of May 1731.[31]

By 7 July he was writing of poor people dying in the streets of Surat. Towards the end of the month he was devoting his whole attention to describing the appalling conditions all round.[32] Even Mr. Henry Lowther, who was not ordinarily moved by the sufferings of his neighbours, noted: 'Grain of all kind is excessively dear and in all probability the next season will be still worse. The streets are now full of Poor Souls perishing for want. We have not had one drop of rain these seventeen days.'[33] Five or six thousand people from the neighbourhood of Ahmadabad, Baroda and elsewhere came looking for sustenance in Surat, but turned away towards the Deccan in disappointment. This, the diarist noted, was a very desirable decision.[34] There was acute fear of pestilence breaking out in the town at the close of September, 1731. The stench of dead bodies polluted the air and Sorab issued general orders that any corpse found on the streets would be immediately buried by the scavengers without any further reference to anybody else.[35] This announcement and two general prayers for rain which he arranged seem to have been the sole contributions of Sorab Ali Khan towards the alleviation of the miseries of the city. However, he continued his search for money and projected a general contribution from the merchants and other citizens when the famine was at its worst.[36]

While the famine was taking its toll of the city's populace, relations between the governor and the principal merchant in the town were seadily getting worse. Sorab was feeling nervous about the approach of his legally acknowledged successor Mustapha Khan. He had good reason to believe that Mustapha would find powerful supporters within the walls of the city. A sore point in this affair was the fortified suburban complex built by Mohammad Ali at Otway. As early as February, 1731, Sorab warned Mohammad against the danger of this stronghold being taken over by Mustapha Khan. In that event, as everybody in town knew, Mustapha would not only menace the defence of the city but command the river Tapti which was the lifeline for Surat. Two of the city's commanders were detailed to keep a watch on the movements of Ali specifically to guard against his admitting Mustapha's contingents inside Otway.[37] Mohammad Ali was in fact keeping in fairly close touch with Mustapha Khan, as was also the case with most other important merchants in town.[38] The first real difficulty began in the middle

of March when Sorab Ali pressingly invited the Bohra merchant to come away from Otway, where he had been living for some time, and take up his residence in town as of old. Sorab also offered to station troops at Otway to guard Mohammad Ali's valuable property. Ali replied he was himself at Otway to take care of the Marathas, if they decided to come that way and that he was perfectly able to look after himself. He thanked the governor kindly but he would not join the dance. This move won the unwilling admiration of the Dutch diarist who noted that by this refusal 'the sly Bohra' had protected Otway from falling into the hands of Sorab Ali.[39] This, however, was not for long as Sorab Ali had made up his mind not to risk Otway falling into hostile hands. He sent a contingent of artillery which at the time succeeded in persuading Mohammad Ali to change his mind and come to live at Surat.[40] It is possible that from this time Sorab Ali Khan made up his mind not to content himself any more with the small pickings from the lesser fry and decided to crush Mohammad Ali as the first on his list, to be followed by Ahmad Chellaby, the English and the rest.[41] It is abundantly clear, however, that Mohammad regarded his own situation as desperate. He returned to Surat and immediately fortified his ancestral residence, which lay between the Factories of the English and the Dutch, and began to enlist troops. Sorab Ali came to hear of this and decided on immediate action. 'This morning', Henry Lowther wrote to Governor Cowan on 13 April 1732 'a fresh quarrel is broke out between the Governor and Mahmed Alley and the former is now assembling all the soldiers and getting ready a considerable number of guns . . . and at present, will hearken to no composition . . . all the town are in utmost consternation.'[42] Other prominent merchants of the town now intervened to settle the dispute. Mohammad Ali agreed to scale down the number of his troops from two thousand to two hundred and agreed to make a substantial loan to the governor. But in trying to settle this dispute, Ahmad Chellaby, Seth Laldas and Sidi Masoot came to know at close quarters what was hatching at the Surat *darbar*. As Henry Lowther put it somewhat later: 'They found it impossible to avoid such unheard of oppression but by entering into a firm and faithfull union to which they all consented and confirmed to each other in the solemnest manner their different religions appoint.'[43] Sorab Khan's break with Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Ali's determination to defend himself, the alliance among the other merchants and finally the realization in the city in general that the governor was not in a mood to spare anyone, finally brought about the revolt at Surat in 1732.

On 21 June 1732, Seth Laldas Vitaldas, at the request of the leading merchants of Surat, informed the English Council that a general meeting of the merchants had been arranged that evening at the residence of Mohammad Ali. The aim was to finalize a plan of action against the governor, who was definitely known to have decided upon an open attack on all merchants in two days' time. The local religious men had been consulted and they were of the opinion that the conduct of Sorab Khan was unrighteous and deserved punishment. Mohammad

Ali was willing to place his two thousand men (whom he had presumably retained, although he had promised not to do so) at the disposal of his allies. Other merchants had also raised troops. It had been decided that Teg Bakht Khan would be set up as governor in place of Sorab Ali, and the merchants had already written to Delhi to obtain the necessary *sanad* for this purpose. The governor of the castle would join the merchants in support of his nephew. The merchants requested that the English would at least show their tacit support by allowing Laldas to advise them in his capacity as the broker to the English Company. This request was readily granted.[44] The next day barricades were put up on the streets by Ahmad Chellaby and Sidi Masoot. The governor immediately sent his troops to clear the roads, but the merchants drove them back with heavy loss. The English openly joined the merchants, as did the Killadar and his nephew. Contigents also came in from the Marathas. But the brunt of the fighting initially was borne by the Turkish contingents of Ahmad Chellaby, who quickly distinguished himself for his intrepidity. He was ably supported by the Sidis. It was mainly as a result of their combined action that the governor's troops were forced to vacate the whole locality of the merchants (called *Saudagarpura*) and fall back on the *darbar*.[45] The Dutch were gravely embarrassed by all this. Their major difficulty was that their lodge was situated exactly between the locality of the merchants and the residences of the aristocrats. They knew their Factory would certainly be the target of the governor's artillery immediately they came in on the opposite side. Therefore the Directour recalled forcefully the injunction of the Heeren XVII to remain neutral in local conflicts. Unfortunately for him, the merchants suspected the Dutch of siding with the governor and decided to leave no one of Dutch blood alive in Surat if these suspicions were not immediately allayed. Peter Phoonsen reflected that 'the party of the United Merchants and the Citizens' appeared to be winning and was most likely to prove triumphant. Under the circumstances the admonitions from distant Amsterdam were set aside for the moment and the Dutch 'declared' for the merchants. They did not, however, propose to do anything further, which was not to the liking of the citizens. Seth Dayaram, who with his brother Ruderam [Rudraram?] had been strenuously urging the Dutch to come into the conflict on the side of the merchants, was now called by the governor of the castle and detained 'till the Dutch guns would actually go into action'. Phoonsen angrily pointed out the awkward situation of the Dutch Factory and declared his firm intention not to do anything silly till 'suitably reinforced'. He was immediately taken up at his word and the Turkish contingents of Ahmad Chellaby poured into their lodge. At once the sharpshooters of Sorab Ali Khan opened up against the building from several sides. The Dutch Council noted that in spite of all they could do they had been dragged into this business and now were determined to 'resist force with force'. In point of fact they were not called upon to do very much although the experience of being at the centre of several lines of

fire must have been unpleasant. The English lodge, safely tucked away behind the Dutch Factory and the residences of Ahmad Chellaby and Mohammad Ali, never actually came under fire. However, the English Council, especially Mr. Henry Lowther, took a leading part in the events. The Dutch were supplied with ammunition from the English Factory and their buildings were virtually commandeered by the merchants. On their side Seth Dayaram (who was obviously acting far more as a leading Bania merchant than as the broker to the Dutch) proved to be a tower of strength. It was due to his tireless exertions that the Factory was quickly brought to a posture of defence. Unfortunately, Dayaram was wounded in action on 13 July 1732, when the lodge was under heavy fire from the governor's forces, and died two days later, the only notable casualty among the merchants.[46]

In the mean time, the allies had been doing their best to relieve the pressure on the Dutch lodge, but they found it difficut to act with vigour because their contingents were under different commanders who all had strong and differing opinions. Henry Lowther noted that the 'flower of the allied contingents, the Turks and the Hopsies [Habsis, the Sidi's men]' were tied down in defending the Dutch establishment and added with some asperity that the Dutch who 'are always very lavish in unnecessary salutes' did not have more than three maunds of powder in stock when the trouble started. Lowther for some time remained deeply anxious whether the confederates would be able to stay it out and whether their ammunition would last without a further supply from Bombay, for which he was pressing very hard. The gunners he had supplied the castle did one very useful service when they forced the governor to abandon the *darbar* and fall back on the residence of Mir Abdul Rahim. Here, however, his troops put up an obstinate resistance and it was not till the contingents of the merchants had gone round to cut off the line of supplies by occuyping the Navsari Gate behind Rahim's house that they were forced to sue for peace. On 16 July 1732 Teg Bakht Khan 'proclaimed a cessation of arms' and the following noon Mohammad Ali was put in possession of Otway, with which the whole trouble may be said to have started.[47]

This brings us back to the enigmatic Bohra, who played a singular role in this whole affair. To begin with, it was his quarrel, and although it was quite true that all the merchants stood much to lose, they were ostensibly fighting to save Mohammad Ali from ruin. Ali appeared to be quite aware of it, as on 3 July 1732 Lowther noted: 'Mahmed Alley had acted his part by furnishing us with money and yet all does not do so.'[48] But soon after this the picture changed. In explaining the significant contribution made by the English to the success of the revolt, the English Council noted in retrospect: 'The associates were so assured of everything from Moolna [Mohammad Ali] that they had made but very little preparation and depended upon him. But to make use of Tedge Beg Caun's [Teg Bakht Khan's] expression on this occasion Villains will

always be Villains. This perfidious wretch finding that things would not be brought about so easily and so cheap as was expected at first refused the Siddee and Cheilaby powder and shott, even at the time when all Sorab Cauns force and Syed Walleys particular revenge was bent against these two who maintained the whole head of the action . . . . After we had drove the enemy within their retrenchments about the Durbar, Moolna again played us a slippery trick and denyed us money to continue paying the soldiers.'[49] It is difficult to decide from available evidence how much Mohammad Ali is to be blamed for this. He certainly did not give a written undertaking to the effect that he would bear whatever cost that might be incurred in course of the fighting by the various allied groups. On the other hand he appears to have given general assurances, verbally, of this nature. It must be remembered that the whole thing happened within a very short time—Mohammad Ali was besieged in his house by the governor on 13 April 1732 and the rebellion began on 22 June following—and everyone, with the possible exception of Seth Laldas Vitaldas, must have been feeling highly excited. Mohammad Ali did make the point later that while he was prepared to pay his share in the affair, he should not be called upon to foot the whole bill by himself.[50] This point is certainly arguable, but soon after the capitulation of Sorab, he put himself entirely out of court by assisting in his escape and then sheltering him at Otway.

What happened can be briefly summarized. On 19 July 1732, Sorab Ali Khan marched out of town with a small retinue and took up his quarters at a garden-house to the north of the city. The idea was that the various people who had lent him money would now come to some arrangements for repayment. On 10 August, the whole lot of them disappeared to show up again within the walls of Mohammad Ali's fortifications at Otway to the south of the city. Although Ali denied this strenuously, the consensus in town was that he himself had spirited away the gang and had either been paid handsomely for doing so or had some other dark design in mind. Ali first of all said that no one was at Otway and invited inspection, which no one felt like doing. Then he said that the fire-eating Sayad Wali had forced his way in and would not listen to anything that he, Mohammad, might now say. This meant that the whole fighting began all over again, with this difference, that Teg Bakht as the new governor bore the brunt of it. He received some support from the Sidi and the Europeans and managed to expel his enemies by September 1732.[51]

In the meanwhile Mohammad Ali's conduct had become curiouser and curiouser. He was trying to displace the newly-installed governor and recruiting troops. The governor, all the leading merchants as well as the Europeans, asked him to come and discuss the position with them in an open *darbar*. He refused. To Lowther he confided that he had complete contempt for everybody at Surat with the exception of the English and the Dutch. Lowther thought that Mohammad Ali either had some deep design which he could not fathom or else he was mad.[52]

It is possible that in feeling such contempt Ali allowed himself to become a little careless. On 18 August 1732 Henry Lowther reported the situation to Robert Cowan: 'I addressed Your Honour yesterday . . . and gave Your Honour an account of Moolna's treachery and of the pains we had taken in vain to bring him to hearken to reason, but as no argument we could use with him had any effect Mr. Phoonsen and myself got excused from the office of mediators upon which the Governor [Teg Bakht] resolved to accept of any terms Mahmud Alley would come into in order to make an outward show of reconciliation . . . . Chellaby and Scydee Mosoot went to his [Ali's] house and acquainted him with it and at the same time prevailed upon him to go to the Durbar to wait on the Governor, which he did yesterday about ten in the morning and when he came to take his leave he was given to understand that he was a prisoner and immediately conveyed to a back apartment.'[53]

From the day of his arrest to the day of his death, 29 June 1733, no one saw Mohammad Ali again. His eldest son Mahmud Hosain stepped into his father's business and some at least of his father's troubles. His advisers, Mahmud Araf and Mahmud Sayad, who had been his father's close business associates, along with Rajaram and Jeddaram, who had been brokers to Mohammad Ali, were arrested on what appeared to be a trumped-up charge by Teg Bakht Khan. Mahmud Hosain had to pay Rs. 80,000/- to get them released.[54] Sixty bags of treasure which one of Mohammad Ali's ships had fetched from Mocha were seized and appropriated. The main family residence in town was sealed and all property in it confiscated. All fortifications at Otway were of course totally destroyed. Mahmud Hosain obtained permission to stay in the only building left at Otway, but that too not for any length of time at a stretch.[55] The young man, however, appears to have carried on bravely.[56] But it would seem that he made a mistake in trying to get the Nizam to free his father. Early in June 1733 a letter came from the Nizam to Teg Bakht Khan asking him to release Mohammad Ali as he had been told that there was a great deal of disturbance in town because of the continued imprisonment of this man. The governor at first decided to reply to this letter by a general representation signed by the prominent merchants in town, explaining how it was the continued incarceration of Ali which preserved peace in the town. But for some reason he changed his mind. He sent this explanation, not as a general representation from the town, but as a personal letter from himself. Exactly fifteen days later the English Factory Diary noted: 'This morning Moolna Mahmud Allee departed this life in the castle, where he has been closely confined ever since the 17th August 1732. The occasion of his death is variously reported. He was from the castle carried to his house joining to the New Factory and from thence his corpse was carried to his Garden without the Bariout Gate and there interred with his ancestors.'[57]

REFERENCES

1. This is, in a sense, an over-statement in that physically the town stood much as it was, except for the destruction of the suburban complex built by Mohammad Ali at Otway, i.e. the village Athva immediately to the south of the town. These buildings had come up only in the twenties of the eighteenth century. However, the point of the statemtnt lies in that, compared to the commercial prosperity of the seventeenth century, conditions were miserable and, as it proved, beyond redemption. The state of Surat in 1750 was described by the outgoing Dutch Directeur, Jan Schreuder, in a marvellously detailed memoir in that year. A fairly typical statement in the memoir: 'Muslim merchants, although still numerous in town, have few significantly rich men among them. Compared to olden times when as many as forty ships of these merchants would go out every year, there are scarcely five which can sail now. The rest have either been sold by their owners out of poverty or taken by robbers.' *Hooghe Regeering*, 838, pp. 52-3 (Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague).
2. For the death of Abdul Gafur and the disturbed inheritance of Mohammad Ali, see M. S. Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat* (Orient Longman, 1957), II, 391. Abdul Gafur was a prominent merchant at Surat as early as 1672: *The English Factories in India, 1670-1677* (Charles Fawcett, ed. Oxford, 1936), 233. For local legends about Abdul Gafur's background as also the widely believed story that, apart from other properties, Gafur left Rs. 85,00,000/- in cash see *The Gazetteer of Surat* (Ahmadabad, 1962), 134. The estimate of Mohammad Ali's importance was put down by the Chief of the English Factory, Henry Lowther on 22 April 1732. At this time Ali was having one of his frequent showdowns with the governor Sorab Khan. In this context Lowther wrote: 'How it must end no one can tell but it is the generall opinion that it will be the utter ruine of the greatest merchant that ever lived.' This letter under its date will be found in the *Papers of Sir Robert Cowan*, now preserved at the Public Record Office, Belfast. Sir Robert at the time was governor of Bombay and had extensive private trading connections with Lowther. In about two hundred letters which Lowther wrote to Cowan from Surat during the early thirties it is possible to obtain a fairly detailed knowledge of the changing situation at the port. It will be clear in this paper that Lowther could not stand Mohammad Ali. I have read the Cowan Papers in microfilm at the India Office Library, London.
3. Seth Laldas Vitaldas was the son of Vitaldas and the nephew of Bhimji Parak who was the English broker from 1668. Before him his father Tulsidas Parak occupied the same position. *The English Factories in India, 1668-1669* (William Foster, ed. Oxford, 1927), 85n. In a petition which Seth Laldas made in 1732 he described his own position in the Parak family: *Home Miscellaneous*, vol. 74. Further details of the Paraks are in *S[urat] F[actory] R[ecords]*, XIA, 30.12.1725.
4. The ships of Ahmad Chellaby, as indeed those of the other shipowners, were entered fairly carefully by the Dutch and somewhat lackadaisically by the English in their Factory Diaries. In 1729 Chellaby took out passports from the Dutch for two of his outgoing ships as against nine taken by Mohammad Ali. The Dutch shipping list for that year noted that eight of Chellaby's ships came in that year as against Mohammad Ali's nine. *Inkomende Papieren van Souratte*, K. A. 2060 (The Hague), pp. 188-191. The Chellabys were also an old established trading family in Surat; in fact it is possible they were at least older than the Molla (or Mulna) family founded by Abdul Gafur. At any rate one Mohammad Chellaby was a leading merchant along with Gafur in 1672: *English Factories, 1670-1677*, 26.
5. The death of Rustumjee Monackjee was noted by the English on 31 July 1719, *S.F.R.*, X, under date. The great importance of Rustumjee is clear from the fact that ten years

after his death the family and all landed property of the family were known after him. Thus when Gujarat lay famine stricken in 1731, five hundred Parsis came to the 'Garden of Rustum, the former broker of the English' where they were well received: *Dagregister,* K. A. 2143, p. 890. This daily diary kept by the Dutch is available for the two years 1730-1. This to my mind is the most important source for this time. The three sons of Rustumjee—Framjee, Bomanjee and Nowrojee—had violent quarrels after the death of their father and greatly embarrassed the English, who had engaged all of them as joint brokers. The echoes of these quarrels were still in the English documents in 1732. Thus the Surat Council objected to Bombay's suggestion that after the death of Seth Laldas all three of his sons should be made brokers by pointing to the grave difficulties produced by a similar course after the death of Rustumjee: *S.F.R.* XVI, 67-8. It is a significant fact that in the grave disturbances of 1732 when all prominent merchants did their share for the city, the three younger Rustumjees are mentioned only once when the English wished them to come away from Surat, so as not to be fleeced by the governor: *S.F.R.* XVI, 41, 43. Nowrojee Rustumjee, the youngest of the three, indeed, emerged as the craftiest of the lot. In these years he is often to be found in the *Mayor's Court Proceedings* of Bombay, e.g. Range 416, vol. 103, pp. 2-3, and later in a ferocious struggle with Seth Jagannathdas Laldas: *S.F.R.*, XVIII, 168-70.

6. The initial resentment against the English at Surat early in the seventeenth century was precisely because the local merchants saw them as rivals in the trade to the Red Sea. By that time the trade of Gujarat with South East Asia had declined and 'the Red Sea traffic which had always been a speciality of the Surat traders was now the only commerce of importance left to them, and if that was to be taken away they would indeed be sorry straits'. (William Foster, *English Factories, 1618-21,* xiii). It would be going beyond the scope of the present paper if I were to discuss in detail exactly how much of this trade was still retained by the traders of Surat. Such a discussion is indeed possible from available documentation although precise figures are not abundant. I shall here only refer to some of the comments of Professor Holden Furber on the topic. In the trading season 1731-2 twenty-eight ships in all called at Mocha. Of these only four were European Company ships. Among the rest 'those freighted and commanded by Indians outnumbered those commanded by Europeans both in numbers and tonnage; the thirteen primarily Indian-financed ships totalled 4390 tons, and the European controlled ships only 2440 tons.' *Bombay Presidency in the Eighteenth Century* (Bombay, 1965), 32.

7. For a summary of political developments: M. S. Commissariat, Op. Cit. 450ff., also 507 for a note on the revenues of Surat. The difficulty of Krishnadas was noted by Henry Lowther who wrote: 'Affairs in this Govt. are put in the hands of Said Wallee and Mier Abdull Rahim who are both great enemies to the Dewan. So I judge he now will be made a sacrifice to their hidden resentment.' *R[obert] C[owan] P[apers]*, 5.x.1731. Seth Laldas in a letter to Henry Lowther summed up the situation thus: 'You have a Governor to deal with who by force of arms has maintained his post in rebellion against his sovereign against whom he has shut his gates in the person of Mustapha Caun, inv.sted with royal grants for the government of Surat and its dependencies. Its true he never would have been so bold to withstand the commands of a king capable to putt his commands in execution but by being too well assured by his friends at Court that could he but amuse or by force keep his competitor from getting into the possession of the gov.rnment, they should be able by money or other practices to get those orders reversed . . . thus you behold a young man triumphing over his enemies, flushed with success and surrounded with a set of hungry and rapacious courtiers who are daily driving him from one oppression to another.' *S.F.R.*, XV, 35. The tone of asperity is partly to be explained by the

fact that immediately before writing this letter the Seth had parted with Rs. 70,000/- as a loan to the governor.

8. The point that Laldas and Dayaram along with Mohammad Ali were the major creditors of Sorab was made by Lowther in discussing a loan of Rs. 210,000/- made to him in January 1732. Lowther noted there was nothing new in this only formerly Mahmed Alley satisfied one moiety and the other between them.' *R.C.P.*, 25.1.1732. The assigning of the customs, in *Dagregister*, 1.1.1730, K. A. 2060, p. 650.
9. Chellaby's letter to Phoosen, K. A. 2060, p. 1:7; for the following developments, see pp. 119-20.
10. *Dagregister, ibid.*, 665-6.
11. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, under date.
12. *Ibid.*, 2.111.1730-8.111.1730.
13. P. L. Phoonsen to Batavia, 26.11.1730, K. A. 2060, p. 77.
14. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, pp. 673-4.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 681.
16. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, pp. 812-3 and *ibid.*, 28:IX.1731 in K. A. 2143, pp. 887-8.
17. The close connection betwe.n Ali and Sorab is noted in *Dagregister*, 24.III.1730, K. A. 2060, p. 697; the suspicion of Ali in the town is in *Ibid.*, pp. 712-3.
18. Henry Lowther to Robert Cowan, *R.C.P.* 23.VIII.1731 and 7.I.1732.
19. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, p. 650.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 694.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 707.
22. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, p. 707.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 708.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 708.
25. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, p. 712.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 718.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 730.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 739.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 741 and 743-4. The diarist always noted faithfully whatev.r was being said in the town of general interest. There was of course never any proof behind the mass of rumour he would from time to time put down. What he did note was what the town was talking about and the mood of the citizens. Thus in August 1730 he noted blood-curdling stories about Sorab Khan kidnapping children from the streets and presumably sacrificing them in secret because his astrologers had asked him to do so. The town believed these stories, and because of strenuous complaints, the Kazi publicly called upon Sorab Khan to deny such allegations. This Sorab duly did and challenged anyone to produce a shred of evidence against him, which nobody did. The rumours then died down. *Ibid.*, pp. 766, 837-8.
30. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2060, p. 745. The diarist continued to chronicle the depredations of the governor throughout 1730-1. One particularly ghastly episode was the arrest of the young son of Dada Parak in November, 1730. Mohammad Ali interven.d for the youth and had him released but he had been so severely whipped while in custody that he died two days after. *Ibid.*, pp. 829-30, 838-9. Henry Lowther, who was usually not the man to write of such things and who tended to think of Sorab as rather a good chap, noted on 23 August 1731: 'Futteechund, a pearl broker and a man of substance . . . leaves this place with design to live upon Bombay to avoid the oppressions of this governor who has lately treated him very roughly besides taking from him a considerable sum of money.' *R.C.P.*, under date.
31. *Dagregister*, K. A. 2143, p. 800.

32. *Ibid.*; p. 836.
33. Lowther to Cowan, 24. VI. 1731, *R.C.P.*, under date. In several letters written at this time Lowther urged on Cowan the desirability of trading in grain while the scarcity lasted.
34. *Dagregister*, K.A. 2143, p. 865.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 884-5.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 855, 858 (the call for rains) and 844-5 (the projected l.vy). Seth Laldas was very active in relief work and started communal kitchens in the town, *Ibid.*, p. 904.
37. *Dagregister*, K.A. 2143, p. 697.
38. On 1 June 1731, for example, the diarist noted that Mohammad Ali had sent Rs. 1200/- as *nazar* to Mustapa Khan, as had other merchants, according to their ability. *Ibid.*, p. 811.
39. *Dagregister*, K.A. 2143, pp. 720-1.
40. There is some difficulty in tracing Ali's movements accurately in these weeks. I have here used a letter that Henry Lowther wrote on 21 July 1732 giving a resumé of recent developments, *S.F.R.*, XVII, 60ff. The chronological sequence, however, cannot be regarded as entirely beyond doubt.
41. In the letter above, Lowther described how Laldas had communicated news of this conspiracy to the English Council. There is, however, no disinterested testimony available on this point.
42. *R.C.P.*, under date.
43. This is a quotation from the letter referred to in note 40.
44. *S.R.R.*, XVI, Consultation 21 June 1732.
45. The events of these days were carefully chronicled both by the English and the Dutch The Dutch version, which agrees in everything with that of the English except for a discrepancy of about a week in dating the outbreak of troubles, can be found in K.A. 2185, p. 244ff. There cannot be any doubt that the English chronology is to be preferred as it is borne out by the daily letters which Lowther was at the time writing to Cowan.
46. 'Apart from the Dutch version of events referred to above, Lowther had this to say: I know it has been very confidently reported that the Dutch were in his [Sorab Khan's] interest in the first breaking out of our troubles, but as to my own part I was allways satisfied to the contrary from the ill treatment they have received, and more particularly this last season, but is was impossible for them to declare sooner unless they had all a mind to have been sacrificed.' *R.C.P.*, I.VIII.1732. It is to be noted that apart from Dayaram, Seth Laldas Vitaldas himself died on 26 June 1732. He did not, however, die in action, but may have died as a result of driving himself too hard. His death noted: *S.F.R.*, XVI, 53.
47. Letters, 8 July, 10 July and 13 July in *R.C.P.* The conclusion of the troubles was written about on 17 July 1732. *Ibid.*
48. Letter under date in *R.C.P.*
49. *S.F.R.*, XVI, 62.
50. The case for and against Mohammad Ali (the emphasis being heavily *against* him) was continuously argued in August 1732. The best account is in *S.F.R.*, XVII, 2-10.
51. Lowther's letters dated I.VIII.1732 and 7.VIII.1732 in *R.C.P.* Also S.F.R&, XVII, 12ff.
52. Lowther's letter, 4 August 1732 in *R.C.P.*
53. In *R.C.P.*, under date.
54. *S.F.R.*, XVII, 36-7, 39-40.
55. *S.F.R.*. XVII, 43.

56. The strenuous efforts made by Mahmud Hosain to keep the family business going were noted in *Ibid.*, 59, 60 and 61.
57. For the Nizam's letter see *Ibid.*, 129-30; the governor's change of mind, *Ibid.*, 132, and the last quotation, *Ibid.*, 135.

A. Das Gupta

Atisa : A Challenge to Indian Scholarship

I

Mokshamular karechhe dharya
Amara hoyechhi arya
Chhedechhi sakal karya

"Max Muller has found us to be of Aryan stock and therefore we have retired from all work". Rabindranath's sarcasm about our inactivity is nowhere so true, poignant and pathetic as in Indology outside India. We derive immense spiritual and moral glory in affirming the spread of Indian culture abroad though we owe most of the connected discoveries to foreigners. These discoveries are not always archaeological explorations for which resources and opportunities were not available to Indians. Derivation of Turkic Sart/Sarto from Sanskrit Sartha or that of Siberian Shaman from Sanskrit Sramana/Pali Samana did not involve on-the-spot investigations. Yet these two words, Sart and Shaman, stand out as monuments in the migration of Indian culture into the sands and snows of Inner Asia. Speaking of Inner Asia one cannot but recall that our two great scholars, Sarat Chandra Das and Rahul Sankrityayan, worked in not too convenient conditions. Our contributions to Tibetology, which we often claim to be an integral part of Indology, have been insignificant if we exclude Sarat Chandra Das and Rahul Sankrityayan.

II

A decade ago the present writer had visited the temples and monasteries of Central Tibet in the company of some Ladakhi Lamas. The writer did not, as he still does not, suffer from the complex called Greater India and was not particular in tracing the Indic origins of the objects noticed. An event from this itenerary constitutes a historic experience for this writer, a student of history. This happened in the first month of Tibetan year.

Besides being the time for new garments, luxury dishes and merriments for all, the first month is a special celebration for the Yellow Sect (dge-lugs-pa, pronounced Gelugpa). The Yellow Sect originating with Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1417), a great Lama from Kokonor region, captured political power in Central Tibet in the sixteenth century and by the middle of the seventeenth century made

The dates are in Christian Era.

The word Lama (bla-ma in transcription) is used, as per general usage outside Tibet, in respect of all monks and priests.

their hierarch, the Dalai Lama, the undisputed sovereign of Tibet. Though in actual administration lay element (members of ancient royal/feudal houses and the like) was taken into power and in fact at every level of administration a monk-official and a lay-official worked together, the ruling Lamas at the top maintained that the power belonged to the Sangha (dge-dun, pr. Gedun).

Tsong-kha-pa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, had instituted a special prayer for the new year month. This prayer (smon-lam, pr. Monlam) was to invoke the advent of the Buddha Maitreya. The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) enlarged the Prayer to the form in practice till the Flight of the Fourteenth (1959).

During the month of Monlam the entire administration of the metropolis, that is, Lhasa, was taken over by the Lamas from the three monasteries around Lhasa. These monasteries had captured political power in the sixteenth century and the exclusive Lama administration of the metropolis was a token of the residuary powers or ultimate sovereignty of the Sangha.

In the Monlam month no Lama high or low was to bow to a layman, particularly a stranger. Another protocol proscribed riding on the road around the Cathedral (Jo-khang=Skt. Bhattarakagriha) during the Monlam as the Dalai Lama usually resided in the Cathedral at the time. Horse as an engine of power first emerged in Inner Asia, and appropriately riding around the seat of the Imperium came to be banned during the period.

A few days before the commencement of the New Year, the writer had left Lhasa to visit Gan-den (dgah-ldan=Skt. Tushita), one of the three monasteries and the one with the mausoleum of Tsong-kha-pa. When he returned the New Year had set in and the special rules of the road were effective. Though his Ladakhi companions affirmed that a visitor from India—Phag-yul (hphags-yul) or Aryabhumi—would be permitted riding because at the moment the Dalai Lama was not inside the Cathedral, the writer dismounted on reaching the ring. Some Lamas noticed this and were delighted at the observance of propriety.

One Lama asked the writer whether he was also a Ladakhi. On answering in the negative he wanted to know the exact place—the city—from where the writer hailed. The writer said "Kata" (Kata or Kalikata is Tibetan for Calcutta). The inquisitive Lama burst out "Kata, Kalikata. That means Vangala". He collected quite a few of his friends and bowed thrice (Namaskar in Indian fashion) and said "Look, this man is come from Vangala from where Jo-Atisa (Prabhu Atisa) came to Tibet". Then followed this dialogue.

Lama: "Are you a Buddhist?"

Writer: "No".

L: "Then you will not know Jo-Atisa".

W: "I do know his name".

L: "How is that for a non-Buddhist?"

W: "In Vangala many know him and know his full name Dipankara Srijnana Atisa. His name lives as the mark of intellect".

L: 'I do not fully accept your word. Is the name current today in your country?"

W: "Yes. I have my son named Atisa".

L: "I am surprised". "I am surprised".

The Lama's peroration still rings in the ears of the writer. "Today is a most auspicious day for me. I come from Mongolia and this man comes from Vangala. I have taken nearly two years to reach Lhasa. I arrived only this morning a few hours ago to participate in Monlam and what a happy angury that I meet a native of the land of Jo-Atisa. Jo-Atisa came to preach the correct Doctrine nine hundred years ago and his preachings spread from Tibet into Mongolia. Friends, join me in salutation to this man from the south. We salute the land of Jo-Atisa". The Lama bowed thrice again and departed.

This strange conduct of a Lama during the Monlam was an inscrutable sight to the non-Buddhist traders on the street. Monlam is also the season when Musulman merchants from India (Ladakh) and Turkestan (Sinkiang) along with the Tibetans and Newars throng the streets of Lhasa. Most confounded were the Chinese, the civilians in blue as well as the soldiers in khaki.

Though not a devotee of the fetish of Greater India, this writer quite naturally felt a gratification on being honoured as a compatriot of Atisa. He, however, felt more interested to know the place of Atisa in the history of Inner Asia, Tibet and Mongolia. Atisa (b.982) came to Tibet in 1042 and passed away in 1054 near Lhasa.

III

The Gelugpa (Yellow Sect) was a continuation and development from Kadampa (bkah-gdams-pa), the sect commencing with Atisa's Tibetan disciple Domton (hbrom-ston, 1002-1064). Like Atisa, Tsong-kha-pa the founder of Yellow Sect was recognized as the incarnation of Manjusri. The Gelugpa in their zeal to wear "true and original Indian" character on their reforms not only claimed Atisa to be the precursor of Tsong-kha-pa but even affiliated their incarnation of priest-king to Atisa's inspiration. Sarat Chandra Das, on the basis of Gelugpa literary sources and legends, traced "the Grand Hierarchy of Tibet" to Indian origins.

Indian scholarship since Sarat Chandra Das has concerned itself more with Atisa's birth place than with Atisa's role in the evolution of the Grand Hierarchy. Sarat Chandra Das had located Atisa's place in Vikrampur (Dacca) while Rahul Sankrityayan, fifty years later, located it in Bhagalpur (Bihar). Scholars of Bengal and Bihar have found it a worthy point for debate.

Much for instance has been made with the spellings "Bangala" and "Bhangala". Our scholars have been singularly oblivious of the likelihood of "Bangla", "Bhangala" or "Vangala" originating in Tibeto-Burman diction in early Vedic or

pre-Vedic times. Vanga was possibly derived from Bang-ba (sbang-ba or bangs-pa= to be wet), as the Tibeto-Burmans over-flowing from the Himalayas into the plains in pre-Vedic times might have found parts of eastern India. As the French scholar Przyluski suggested decades ago, expressions like Anga, Vanga and Kalinga are relics of Tibeto-Burma migration through eastern India into Burma and Indo-China. It is to be noted that our most sacred river (Ganga) derives the name from Tibetan Gang (gangs=snow); in Tibetan imagery Indian Ganga is the daughter of Tibetan Gang-ri (gangs-ri=snow mountain=Mount Kailas); at least one source of the Ganga rises in the catchment area of Mount Kailas.

When these place names became current they might not have denoted their later locations. Vanga or Vangala could have changed boundaries or locations. Kamboja of north west India and Kamboja of Indo-China provide a classic case. Vangala with its characteristic cult of Vajrayana perhaps contained both Bihar and Bengal of later times.

This little contribution to the Jubilee Number of *Bengal Past and Present* aspires to divert the attention of our scholars from the birth place of Atisa to his field of work in the north. Had the Grand Hierarchy of Tibet, that is, the rule of Dalai Lamas (the successive incarnations of Avalokitesvara) and the system of Ganden-photrang (dgah-ldan-pho-brang=Heavenly Palace=Heavenly Government), any suggestion in the Indian Buddhist Sangha ? The concepts of Bodhisattva, Nirmanakaya and Ekotibhava originated in India and had spread to Tibet even before Atisa. Had these concepts the seeds for a hierarchical government? Or the socio-economic conditions—the breakdown of tribal community, the dissolution of monarchy and the emergence of monastic leadership—between the advent of Buddhism and the final victory of Buddhism in Tibet called for a hierarchical system of Government?

How far Atisa was connected with the rise of "new order" in Tibet which later spread to Mongolia along with the Yellow Sect propagation? Will this question be left to a British (Richardson), an Italian (Tucci) or a Russian (Bogoslovsky), while the Indian scholars debate about Atisa's birth place?

Nirmal Sinha.

"Bungoo"—River Thugs on the Hooghly

In the early days of British rule in Bengal the Hooghly river was infested with river-dacoits and thugs. W. H. Sleeman calls them "Bungoo", a name otherwise unknown, in *Ramaseeana or A Vocabulary of the Peculiar Language used by the Thugs* (Calcutta 1836) and he adds this note under the name:

'These men live chiefly in the district of Burdwan, on the banks of the Hooghly river. They move up and down the ganges during the months of November, December, January, and February, always pretending to be going to or coming from holy places, such as Benaras, Allahabad etc. . . .' (page 72).

At the time when Sleeman wrote 'the district of Burdwan' included all the districts or parts of the districts that lie on the western bank of the river, that is Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan.

Piracy in the estuaries of the Hooghly and in the lower reaches of the river was not unknown in the earlier days, specially in the seventeenth century and later, when piracy became firmly associated with the Portuguese and the Portuguese word *armada* was adopted in Bengali as *hārmād* meaning a pirate or pirates. In some Middle Bengali texts and manuscripts the coastal regions of the present day Howrah and Midnapore districts are mentioned as the country of the pirates ("hārmāder deś") which the honest sailors had to pass quietly and at night for a safe passage.

Piracy on the sea board and in the estuaries of the Hooghly and its branches is mentioned in a story in the *Daśakumārcarita* (eighth century). The plot of the story is laid down in Tāmralipta. The hero was captured and his cargo looted by "Madgu" but was rescued later by Roman sailors. We are not concerned with the story nor with piracy, apparently based on some kind of racial memory when [R]oman traders visited Bengal regularly. But the term *madgu* is very interesting. [T]he word is good Sanskrit, even Vedic. It denoted an aquatic bird or a fish; the [r]ot meaning was diving or submerging. In Vedic *madgu* was a bird like a [k]ingfisher that caught fish under water. In Sanskrit the word is extended into *[m]adgura* meaning a fish that lies in the mud under water. Apparently in spoken [S]anskrit *madgu* had come to indicate first a diver and then a pirate. Spoken [S]anskrit *madgu* became in Spoken Prakrit *maggu* which, I consider, became 'mag(a)' in the Vernacular (Bengali). In late Middle Bengali the word *mag(a)* appears with *phiriṅgi* (a Portuguese or any European) and the phrase *mag-phiriṅgi* stands for the pirate foreigner. Chittagong and Arrakan have been the centres of the various activities of the Portuguese and their hybrid progeny. Therefore *mag* which had already lost its real meaning, came to be treated as an independent

word meaning 'associates of the phiringhee'. The people of Chittagong and Arrakan thus came to be known as *mag* in the late eighteenth century or still later.

The *Bungoo* may be connected with *mag*. The Spoken Prakrit *maggu* which directly developed into *mag(a)* might have produced an alternative form *maṅgu* by dissimilation,[1] and this *maṅgu* seems to have survived upto the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century as *baṅgu* (*Bungoo*, as written by Sleeman).[2]

A glimpse of the "Bungoo" or the river-dacoit on the Hooghly is found in Vipradāsa's *Manasāmaṅgala* (published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta). The original poem seems to have been written when Husain Shah had just occupied the throne of Bengal, but the work is now known in three manuscripts none of which appears to go before the second half of the eighteenth century. In any case the second part of the poem as known to us is obviously late, and it can not be older than the middle of the seventeenth century. The river-decoits here are called "Buraniyā' probably meaning a diver. The relevant portion (see page 214) is quoted below in translation.

Behulā's boat with the dead, rotting body of her husband was now approaching Chanak (near Barrackpore of the present day).

"The fair girl was fasting for days when her floating box entered the outskirts of Chanak. The most of the criminal *Buṛaniyās* that lived there moved about in disguise. They wear bright big circular paint (of sandal paste) on the forehead; they hold the holy string of lotus-seed beads in their hand. They mutter meaningless words as incantation; they wear on their necks neckchain of *rudrākṣa* beads; and at night they are engaged in criminal activities They are adept in the art of deception; they kill and rob men of their possessions. When the nice floating box came there the *Buṛaniyās* consulted their astrologer and were assured of a good boat. Accordingly, one of then got into the floating box and stopped it."

This description of the river-thugs on the Hooghly though meagre is rather important as it corresponds to Sleeman's account.

REFERENCES

1. Compare Bengali *mug*: Hindi *muṅg* from Sanskrit *mudga*.
2. The unusual change of initial *m* to *b*, might have been due to the influence of a wo like *baṅga*

Sukumar Sen

been guaranteed by the Tibetan government in an agreement made in 1775. The agreement had confirmed all the earlier trade arrangements and had fixed the proportion of alloy and fine metal in the Nepalese currency (called *mohar*) which was to be the only legal tender in Tibet.[9]

China's victory in the war had far-reaching results on Nepal's foreign relations. Nepal came under the Chinese tributary system; quinquennial missions from Kathmandu to Peking were looked upon by China as tokens of Nepal's acknowledgement of China's political and cultural primacy.[10] Like Burma, Annam, Korea and Siam[11] Nepal was regarded as a client state lying outside the administrative jurisdiction or direct political authority of the Chinese government but treated as having subordinate relations with the Celestial Emperor. China's prestige increased in the Himalayas; so did her control on the Tibetan administration by the augmentation of the powers of the Ambans.[12] Preventing a future Nepalese attack on Tibet became the most important object of China's policy towards Nepal. Peace between Nepal and Tibet was essential for, among other things, the safe passage of the Nepalese tributary missions to Peking through the intervening Tibetan territory. Nepalese-Tibetan frontier, so the Chinese annals claim, was demarcated at this time and boundary pillars set up.[13] Chinese troops manned the military posts on this frontier. Nepal had to give up the Tibetan territories occupied during the war. The recovery of these tracts, lying south of the main Himalayan watershed and commanding the passes of great strategic and commercial importance, remained henceforth the cherished ambition of the Nepalese statesmen and consequently an abiding source of dispute with the Tibetan government.[14]

For the British the Sino-Nepalese war was at once an opportunity and a cause for anxiety. Fear of China and the hope of military assistance from the British led the Nepalese government to agree to a commercial treaty with the Company; such a treaty the Company had sought for long in vain.[15] But the British had no desire for any military involvement with China for Nepal's sake; yet at the same time they could not overlook that "no event was more to be deprecated than the conquest of Nepal by the Chinese", because in the resultant contiguity of the British and Chinese frontiers lay the dangers of recurrent border disputes.[16] In such circumstances, Lord Cornwallis. the Governor-General, attempted a diplomatic solution of the problem; but this attempt, far from realising his objective, damaged British relations with both Nepal and China. To Nepal's fear that the British were an aggrandising power was added her distrust that the British were unreliable allies. The Chinese suspected the British having been hand in glove with the Nepalese; the known British interests in the Tibetan trade, the recent Anglo-Nepalese treaty and the Nepalese invasion, all suggesting some causal relationship. Samuel Turner, who was sent by Warren Hastings to Tashilumpo (in 1783) to promote Bengal's trade with Tibet, believed that the "similarity of dress and discipline" between the Gurkha troops and the Company's sepoys might have reinforced the Chinese suspicion. The Nepalese-Tibetan war provided the

Chinese with sufficient excuse to take a cold attitude towards Lord Macartney's mission to Peking (1793) seeking greater commercial facilities for Britain in China.[17]

The increased Chinese prestige and influence in the Himalayan border states after the war was for the British an unwelcome political development; commercially it proved ruinous. Tibet was closed to British trade by the Chinese, and remained so for almost a century. The Sino-Nepalese war and its results showed the British that Nepalese action could injure British interests in Tibet and China even if the British gave no support to this action.

The Company had no adequate knowledge of the "nature and extent" of China's relations with Nepal established by the Peace of 1792, but it was recognised that this knowledge was necessary to ascertain how China would react if the British sought closer connexion with Nepal for commercial reasons. Enquiries through Abdul Kadir[18] and Captain Knox[19] established that there was no love lost between the Nepalese and the Chinese and that the Amban's attempt to influence Nepal's internal politics had been foiled by a strong anti-Chinese element in the Court of Kathmandu.[20] Nevertheless, in dealing with Nepal the Company was wary. With all his eagerness to establish British influence at the Nepalese Court through an alliance with the ruling party, Lord Wellesley, for instance, had to consider that this alliance did not give umbrage to China. Wellesley was glad that Nepal was "not in any degree dependent on the Chinese empire" and that "no connexion subsists" between Nepal and China of a nature "to limit the Raja of Nepal to contract engagements with Foreign Powers or to render the proposed alliance . . . a reasonable subject of complaint or jealousy to the Chinese government". Yet the British were careful not to have any provision in their treaty with Nepal (1801) which would suggest "a defensive engagement against China" and affect Chinese interests in Nepal "in the remotest degree".[21] The British view of Sino-Nepalese relations at this time seems to have been this: it was unlikely that Chinese connexion with Nepal would develop into Chinese domination, but Nepal did belong to the Chinese sphere of interests. Consequently, the fear of provoking China and thereby injuring Britain's Canton trade had a sort of moderating influence on the Company's Nepal policy.

This was apparent during the Anglo-Nepalese war (1814-16), when the risk of Chinese military intervention in favour of Nepal made Lord Moira, the Governor-General, anxious. Lord Amherst's commercial embassy was then due to go to Peking, and Moira was worried lest it met the same fate as Macartney's earlier mission. Moira was at pains to convince the Chinese authorities at Lhasa that the war had been forced upon the Company by the Nepalese, and that nothing but punishing the aggressors was the British object. The British, he added, had no intention or interest in extending their authority beyond the natural limits of India marked by the mountain ranges. The British had, thus, no desire to compete with the Chinese interests in the Himalayan area far less contest it.[22]

The Nepalese, seeking to pit the Chinese against the British, had represented

to the Amban that the British attack on Nepal was a prelude to their invasion of Tibet; the Chinese were entreated to attack Bengal and create a diversion in Nepal's favour. The Chinese Emperor sent a general with troops to Lhasa to ascertain if the British had really any design on Tibet and to oppose them if they had.[23]

Although by then the war was over, Moira was troubled with the thought that China might resent the British establishing treaty relations with Nepal ignoring her suzerain. A British residency at Kathmandu established by the treaty of Sagauli (1816) could also stimulate China's jealousy and suspicion, particularly as she herself had no such establishment in Nepal. The Nepalese exploited this anxiety. They informed the Resident, Edward Gardner, that

> "China was deeply offended, considering Nepal as tributary to the Emperor as this government having entered into war and concluded peace with the English without his sanction and knowledge."[24]

To meet the supposed Chinese wrath, the Nepalese government sought the British protection, calculating that rather than risk a conflict with China, the British would withdraw the Residency and restore the Nepalese Terai they had annexed.[25] The stratagem had very nearly worked. Moira, who was having troubles with the Marhattas and the Pindaris, could have hardly defended the British position in Nepal if openly challenged by China. He was, therefore, prepared, should the Chinese insist, to withdraw the Residency and avert a misunderstanding with China for the sake of England's China trade.[26]

Fortunately, however, the Chinese authorities in Tibet were apparently satisfied with Moira's explanation of the war and his assurance that the Company's relations with Nepal would not affect China's position there. What the British had done was "perfectly correct and proper", the Chinese assured Moira.[27] The Chinese Emperor had confidentially asked the Amban to keep the British away from Kathmandu,[28] but the Amban made rather a mild request for the withdrawal of the Residency "out of kindness towards us [Chinese] and in consideration of the ties of friendship".[29] Moira chose to ignore this, and the Chinese did not press it further; in May 1818 they declared having been finally satisfied with the Company's settlement with Nepal.[30]

China's attitude during the war was a clear evidence that she had little sympathy for Nepal and no desire to be drawn into a conflict with the British for Nepal's sake. The Amban and the Chinese general sent to Lhasa strongly distrusted the Nepalese. What to speak of military assistance, not even pecuniary help was given to Nepal because, as the Amban explained in his letter to the Nepalese, "it is not customary to give treasures of China to other countries." The general also had no faith in the Nepalese; he wrote to Moira to explain the genesis of the war so that he could expose "the falsehood of the Goorkha raja". It seemed

to the general "quite inconsistent with the usual wisdom of the English" that they should invade Tibet when they had such a heavy stake in the China trade. The Nepalese government were threatened with punishment if their allegation against the British proved false.[31]

China did not claim any monopoly of relations with Nepal; the Emperor clearly disavowed any responsibility for the removal of the British Residency from Kathmandu; he told the Nepalese King that since he and the British lived "in far distant countries", the "sovereign authority of the Emperor of China does not extend over" Nepal.[32] What China seems to have been interested in was the continuance of Nepal's tributary relations with the Manchu Court. It is significant that while disavowing any obligation for the protection of Nepal from the British, the Amban reminded the Nepalese government of their obligation to regularly send tributary embassies to Peking.[33] Obviously, from the Chinese point of view, Nepal's treaty relations with the British had made little change to her status as a Chinese tributary.

The Anglo-Nepalese war had some other results as well. The Residency henceforth served as an observation post in the Himalayan region whence the British could take a better view of the Chinese in Tibet. At Kumaun and Garhwal the British territory became directly conterminous with the Chinese territory in Tibet. Sikkim, which had helped the British against Nepal, was brought under British protection without any apparent Chinese opposition. The British appeared as a potential force in the Himalayan area where China had already established her influence.

The Nepalese policy after the war was to balance China against British India as a measure of security against domination by the latter. Politically relations with China were now found more useful to the Nepalese government than ever before. Missions were sent to Peking with scrupulous care and regularity, bearing tributes of indigeneous products and letters from the Nepalese kings, paying homage to the Chinese Emperors and invoking their blessings. The missions took normally a year and a half to cover the journey both ways. The distance between Kathmandu and Peking through Techienlu and Chengtu[34] was 2530 miles. The missions brought back valuable presents from the Emperor along with a letter to the king of Nepal advising him to govern well and to receive the Emperor's blessings. The members of the missions were provided with food, transport and accommodation by the Tibetan and Chinese authorities as soon as they crossed the Nepalese frontier. The goods carried by the missions on their outward and return journeys passed duty free.[35] On their return these missions were received three miles away from Kathmandu by the king of Nepal. Then, accompanied by the highest officers of the state and a large body of soldiers, the king escorted the missions into the capital where people stood in hundreds to welcome this impressive symbol of their country's relations with the richest and the most powerful oriental state. In the full *durbar* the Emperor's presents brought by the

missions were displayed and his "decree" blessing his loyal and humble vassal read. And all this the British Resident noted, together with the implied warning: keep off from Nepal on pain of Chinese reprisal. The Nepalese government strongly believed, as Brian Hodgson, the Resident,[36] reported to the Government that

> we should hesitate at any time to push to extremities an acknowledged dependent of the celestial empire.[37]

For Nepal connexion with China was not merely a useful deterrent to British domination but a means of embarrassing the British government as well. No wonder that the Anglo-Chinese war (1839-42) should be seized by the Nepalese government, then dominated by the bitterly anti-British Pandes,[38] as their opportunity. Emissaries were sent to Peking and Lhasa offering assistance to the Chinese and seeking their support against the British who were represented as a common enemy of China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The King of Nepal, Rajendra Vikram Shah, Hodgson reported, professed "extreme eagerness to throw off his allegiance to the British and to resume the old career of his ancestors" by strengthening relations with the Emperor. Throughout the China war which coincided with the Afghan war and other troubles, Hodgson was concerned that the Nepalese situation would turn even worse if China gave military aid or even moral encouragement to the Pandes.[39]

The situation became further complicated when the Dogras invaded western Tibet in May 1841. The Dogras, Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh, had brought Ladakh, which paid tribute to Lhasa, under their sway in 1834-5.[40] Both the ruler of Ladakh and the Dogras, the latter possibly fearing Chinese intervention, asked for Nepalese assistance. Rajendra Vikram was willing to help the ruler of Ladakh and asked the Amban for authority to do so. As price he wanted the Tibetan territory adjoining the Kerung and Kuti passes. But the Chinese did not want any embroilment with the British on the Indian frontier when at home they were being defeated by the British. Therefore, to the Nepalese entreaties for assistance against the British the Emperor gave a "stern refusal"; the Nepalese king was warned against excessive restlessness. He was censured for his "silly requests" for Tibetan territory.[41] Rajendra Vikram was told that the Chinese government "has little or no purpose to interfere with Ladakh politics", and so the Nepalese would do well to confine themselves to "the established circle of connection cherishing peace and good faith within that circle and [to be] less heedful of novelties beyond it."[42] A Nepalese-Ladakhi alliance, so the Chinese will have thought, could lead to the intervention of Lahore government where the Dogra rajas had commanding influence; and it might even bring in the British who had treaty relations with the Lahore government.

Rajendra Vikram, then, sounded Hodgson if the Nepalese government could

help the Dogras against the Tibetans; the king perhaps expected that the British would welcome such a means of harming the Chinese. Hodgson had no doubt that the real intention of the king and the Pandes was somehow to involve the British with the Chinese, and therefore he discouraged the king's intentions. "We had no desire", Hodgson told Rajendra Vikram, "to do injury to China in any quarter and should willingly desist from our compulsory operations in China proper so soon as justice had been rendered to us."[43]

In the autumn of 1841 the Dogras conquered Gartok and the neighbouring Tibetan territories. Hodgson was now apprehending the appearence of a Chinese army on the scene counting on whose support the Pandes would goad the Nepalese troops to invade the British territory. Further, since the Dogra rajas were subjects of the state of Lahore which was in alliance with the British, the Chinese might suspect the British having incited the Dogras to attack Tibet and if so, they "are very likely to resent it by letting loose Nepal upon us", so Hodgson warned the Government. And then, he added,

> with Chinese, Sikhs, and Gurkhas we shall ere long find ourselves of necessity involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics the clue to which may be difficult to find and impracticable to use when found.[44]

Besides, the Dogra military activities in Ladakh and western Tibet had seriously affected trade in shawl wool, borax, salt and opium in which both the British and Chinese governments had interest.[45] This led the British government to make a strong representation to Maharaja Sher Singh, the ruler of the state of Lahore, that the Dogra activities must stop. Towards the close of the year a Sino-Tibetan army arrived and routed the Dogra troops, killing their general, Zorawar Singh. With the end of the war Nepalese restlessness abated.[46]

Neither the Anglo-Chinese war nor the Dogra-Tibetan war could be exploited by Nepal because the Chinese refused to play into the Nepalese hands; the Chinese would not encourage Nepalese militarism in any way nor give Nepal any excuse for realising her territorial ambitions in Tibet. Nepal's offer of assistance against the British might have appeared to China rather a ruse to serve her own interests than a token of sincere allegiance to her suzerain. Hodgson's reports suggest that the Nepalese King even tried to blackmail the Chinese. His letter to the Amban contained a threat that if the Chinese did not help Nepal against the British, the King "shall be necessitated" to seek British assistance against the Chinese "which he has only to ask for in order to get".[47] The Amban coolly replied that the Emperor "never sends troops to protect the lands of foreign barbarians."[48] Once again the Nepalese had seen how difficult it was to embroil the Chinese against the British and to reap political harvest therefrom.

From the middle of the 19th century the pattern of Nepal's relations with China and Britain started changing as a result of two facts: the establishment of the Rana regime with its settled policy of friendliness and cooperation with the British government; and the decline of the Chinese power. The Nepalese government were no longer eager to exploit the British troubles; they sought to profit by the British alliance. China's weakness was exposed in her successive discomfitures, both military and diplomatic, at the hands of Britain, France, Russia and Japan; revolts and insurrections in the outlying provinces and dependencies indicated the Chinese imperial government's loosening grip over these regions.

The decline of China's power stimulated Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet; the hope of British support made Chinese retribution a less dangerous prospect in Nepalese eyes than it was before. Since the war in 1788-92, Nepal's relations with Tibet had been uneasy as indicated by the periodical disputes over border tracts and trade matters. The Amban mediated in these disputes but not always to the Nepalese satisfaction. There were also other causes of soreness. The Nepalese merchants at Lhasa complained of maltreatment and the Nepalese missions to Peking reported to Kathmandu of their harassments by the Tibetan authorities. In fact, however, these were but pretexts for Jang Bahadur,[49] who found in the Chinese preoccupation in the Taiping rebellion his opportunity to annex some Tibetan territory. This is why Jang Bahadur offered military assistance to the Emperor to crush the rebellion,[50] and then invaded Tibet when the Emperor declined his offer.

The British government's attitude to the Nepalese-Tibetan war was one of keen interest, sharp vigilance and non-interference in what they regarded as an internal crisis in the Chinese empire. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, saw that he had "no right to interfere and no interest in interfering in an issue which is wholly between Nepal and China",[51] and "when it does not appear calculated in any way to injure the interests of the British government or unduly increase the power of Nepal." Nepal, he believed, was a tributary of China. Yet, as Chinese intervention was not impossible nor also the involvement of Sikkim and Bhutan, the Indian government could not just be indifferent to the event, and Jang Bahadur was told accordingly.[52]

Jang Bahadur asked for British assistance when the Nepalese army suffered reverses and when the Amban stepped up pressure on him for peace. The British government's reply to Jang Bahadur was: "whatever emergency might occur and whatever disaster might happen to his troops". no help could be given to Nepal because

> besides involving a breach of treaty it would disturb mercantile transactions annually amounting to from thirty to forty times more than the gross revenues of this Kingdom [Nepal].[53]

The British policy of non-involvement was based on their interpretation of China's attitude to the war. Colonel George Ramsay, the Resident, was confident that China would abstain from military intervention unless the Nepalese troops entered deeper into Tibet, and this appeared to Ramsay impossible for several reasons: the defeats lately sustained by the Nepalese army and the resultant damage to its morale, the enormous cost of the war and its general unpopularity in Nepal, the increasing pressure of the Amban on Jang Bahadur to end the war, and Jang Bahadur's growing fear of Chinese army's arrival to assist the Tibetans.

In March 1856 the war ended with a treaty very favourable to Nepal. It required the Tibetan government to pay Nepal an annual tribute of ten thousand rupees; Nepalese merchants would trade in Tibet duty-free; the Nepalese subjects would have extra-territorial rights in Tibet; a Nepalese *Vakil* would reside at Lhasa to safeguard his country's interests. Nepal undertook to assist Tibet in the event of external aggression.[54] But under the Amban's pressure Jang Bahadur had to give up his demand for the Tibetan territory which the Nepalese army had occupied—Kuti, Kerung, Tuglacote, Chowur Gumba and Dhakling. Jang Bahadur, no doubt because the Chinese power was an obstacle to Nepalese ambitions, wanted to remove that power from Tibet. One of the conditions for peace he laid down was that the Chinese should completely withdraw from Tibet and recognise Tibet's independence; China should only retain a *Vakil* at Lhasa just like Nepal would have hers. The Amban not only flatly rejected this proposal but obliged both the Nepalese and Tibetan governments to "agree that the Emperor of China is to be obeyed by both states as before."[55] But this apparent political gain of China carried with it what proved to be an onerous responsibility for her. Nepal looked to China as the guarantor of her (Nepal's) Tibetan interests; it followed, then, that China's failure to protect these interests would compromise her relations with Nepal.

China's suzerainty over Nepal as reiterated in the treaty of 1856 did not lead to any strengthening of her actual position in Nepal, and so the British government were not at all concerned. They had no suspicion that Jang Bahadur would make a political capital out of Nepal's relations with China. Cavenagh who went to Kathmandu as Jang Bahadur's guest in 1851 had no doubt

> that Jang Bahadur would have severed the connection between Nepal and China which he evidently considered derogatory to his own country, but then, he dared not estrange the Chinese without an assurance of British support.[56]

In Jang Bahadur's loyalty the British government had confidence which his assistance during the Mutiny fully confirmed. This assistance was all the more significant when contrasted with the fact that he had readily exploited China's preoccupation in the Taiping rebellion. It was also noteworthy that Jang Bahadur

did not take advantage of the synchronism of the Mutiny and the second Anglo-Chinese war. The defeat of China in this war tarnished her image in Nepal and proportionately enhanced the British prestige. In the words of Ramsay,

> The late change in our political relations with China has caused great excitement here very favourable to our prestige, for although the Gurkhas admire our superiority as a nation to themselves, they had great doubts as to whether our power could in any way be compared with that of China—now the *sardars* are asking whether we have not lately conquered and taken possession of that country.[57]

Jang Bahadur's attachment to the British seems to have made the Chinese a trifle uneasy. In 1860 the Emperor asked him to furnish details of his services to the British in the Mutiny and the honours he had received from them; the Emperor also wanted to bestow some equally high honour on Jang Bahadur.[58] Earlier, in 1857-8, so the Chinese accounts say, the Emperor had given presents and buttons of rank to Jang Bahadur and Surendra Vikram, the Nepalese King.[59] The Chinese accounts also say that the Emperor wanted the resumption of Nepalese tributary mission which the Taiping disturbances had interrupted. In May 1870 a Chinese ambassador visited Kathmandu; in the following year Jang Bahadur received the title, *Thwang Ling Pimma Ko Ko Kong Wang Syang*, which as translated by his son meant "Leader of the Army, the Most Brave in every Enterprise, Perfect in Everything, Master of the Brave People, Mighty Maharaja".[60]

The Indian government viewed the Nepalese missions to Peking as of mere symbolic importance to both Nepal and China, and so from the British interests point of view they were unobjectionable. When Jang Bahadur sent a mission in 1866, the Indian government did not suspect any political motivation. The Resident saw "cupidity" as the impulse; Jang Bahadur, Ramsay reported to Government, was eager to receive from the Emperor presents which were of "great intrinsic value and consist of

> bales of silk and satin, Chinese embroidered bukkos or cloaks, porcelain, ivory, jade, tortoise shell and other ornaments, pictures and sorts of artificial curiosities."

The Nepalese tribute to the Emperor was of "trifling Value".[61] This mission's return from Chengtu in 1869 led J. W. Wyllie, Actg. Foreign Secretary, to comment that the "last links" between Nepal and China "are broken, and that Nepal had been drawn into somewhat closer union with the British Empire of India". This, he added, "matters little for England" but for China it was of great significance, "for the final loss of all connexion with China distinctly marks a further stage in the decadance of the Empire."[62] It proved, however, a false prophecy. In 1876

the British Minister at Peking, Sir Thomas Wade, reported that the Nepalese government had asked for the Amban's sanction to send a mission to Peking. The Indian government's reaction was expressed thus:

> We have no reason to question the loyalty of Sir Jang Bahadur, but rather the contrary, and it appears . . . in the highest degree improbable that this periodical interchange of presents will lead to a rapprochement with China in a sense hostile to us. The fact is that Sir Jang Bahadur's cupidity is the motive spring. He sends yak's tails and gets back gifts, *pictai vestis et auri*. He gives a trout and catches a salmon. Any attempt on our part to interfere would be unwise.

Although it was recognised that "these missions kept up an artificial importance for the Chinese throne which its military power could never have gained for it", the Indian government had no *"locus standi"* in the matter. Wade was informed accordingly.

> "The Government of Nepal", ran the Indian Government's despatch, "is not, in fact, in the position of the feudatories of the Indian Empire. It enjoys an independent national life, and possesses the the power of making war, entering into treaties and sending embassies without let or hindrance from the British government. . . But apart from these considerations, the relations at present subsisting between the British government and the Government of Nepal, as represented by H. E. Sir Jang Bahadur, are of so cordial a character that the Governor-General in Council has no reason to apprehend that this periodical interchange of presents with China will lead to complications."[63]

In fact, these missions were for the Rana government means of profitable commercial transaction; a large variety of commodities, opium being the main, was sent along with the missions for disposal in China, and all the commodities passed duty free. For the British government these missions served as useful means of obtaining informations about inner regions of Tibet and China; besides, when British explorers in China found themselves in difficulty with the local people, they sought the help of these missions.[64]

In fact, the British government had no reasons to be troubled by the Sino-Nepalese relations which seemed to indicate coolness rather than cordiality. Chinese distrust of the Rana government had increased commensurate with the latter's intimacy with the British. The Nepalese missions to China were suspected of doing espionage work for the British; they were closely examined while entering and leaving the Tibetan territory to prevent any Englishmen travelling

in disguise. The 1866 mission was not allowed to go to Peking and was asked to deliver the tributes at Tachienlu. There it was kept waiting for several months before being permitted to proceed to Chengtu. The mission was accommodated in "a dirty hovel" outside the city where the local Chinese officers treated it with "extreme discourtesy", hoping thereby to effect its return to Kathmandu. In May 1869 the Resident reported that the death of several members of the mission had angered Jang Bahadur so much that it was unlikely that any more mission would be sent to Peking in future. The situation, so it appeared to the Resident, was developing like that in 1854 when maltreatment of a Nepalese mission had afforded Jang Bahadur a pretext to invade Tibet. At Chengtu the Nepalese mission received the Emperor's final order to return to Kathmandu because the road to Peking was unsafe owing to disturbances. Jang Bahadur, however, suspected that this was a mere plea; possibly, he thought, the Emperor was annoyed that the mission had been sent four years later than its due date. Opium, worth four and a half lakhs of rupees, carried by the mission could not be disposed of in China and had to be brought back and stored in the Nepalese godowns at Lhasa before it could be sold at a much lower price to the Indian government.[65] The 1877 mission was also subjected to much harassment before it could reach Tachienlu, and this led Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, to anticipate a Nepalese attack on Tibet. The mission after great difficulty reached Peking in late December 1879 and was lodged in "the dirty buildings". Wade saw the leader of the mission although the Chinese officer in charge of the mission did not like it. The mission returned to Kathmandu in June 1882; instead of the normal period of a year and a half it had taken about five years to complete the journey. E. C. Baber, the British consular officer at Chungking, believed that

> the reasons why the Chinese government keep the Nepalese at a distance is probably that it is by no means anxious to maintain close relations with a country so nearly connected with India.

Besides, he added, "as the tribute missions are little more than disguised trade ventures, the Chinese fear that they will sooner or later develop into a commercial establishment in Western China."[66] And this establishment might serve the economic and political interests of the British, Jang Bahadur's allies. The steadily deteriorating relations between Nepal and Tibet in the later decades of the century and the former's bellicose attitude was an additional worry for the Chinese, who seemed to Baber to be

> apprehensive not for the integrity of their frontier but for the security of its bulwark or rather buffer, Tibet.[67]

The Chinese, so it seemed to the British, came to treat Nepal as Britain's vassal. During the second Anglo-Chinese war, for instance, the Russians were believed

to have instigated the Chinese to goad the Nepalese against the British in India. But the Chinese Emperor in rejecting this suggestion was reported to have told the Russians thus:

> "Nepal is subject to the English barbarians. Were we to propose that it should place its resources at our disposal for an attack upon India, it would be certain to decline giving offence to the English, and the only result would be to open the door to their demands and reclamations."

From this the Indian Foreign Department deduced this conclusion:

> ". . . the Chinese not only look upon Nepal as a feudatory of England, but that they regard the tie binding her to us as much stronger than that by which she is bound to them, and which latter probably consists of nothing more than the so called embassy."[68]

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7. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-9; Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia* (London, 1960), pp. 5-31.
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22. *Papers Relating to the Nepaul War* (1824), p. 720, Moira to Secret Committee, 2 August 1815 ; Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings* (London, 1858), II, pp. 144-5 ; Leo. E. Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814-6", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Delhi,* 1961 (Calcutta, 1963), pp. 208-16 ; Lamb, op.cit., pp. 39-49.
23. *Campbell's Report, op.cit. ;* J. B. Fraser, *Journal of a tour through part of the Himala Mountains (London,* 1826), pp. 526-7 ; Rose, *op. cit.* 210-1.
24. *Foreign Secret Consultations* (hereafter cited as *S.C.*), 14 September 1816, 41.
25. *S.C.,* 14 September 1816, 39, 31-2.
26. *Ibid.,* 43.
27. *S.C.,* 9 November 1816, 19.
28. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *op.cit.,* p. 78.
29. *S.C.,* 11 January 1871, 6 ; H. T. Prinsep, *History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the Administration of the Marquess of Hastings, 1813-1823* (London, 1825), II, pp. 209-13.
30. *S.C.,* 11 January 1817, 7 ; 15 May 1818, 69.
31. *S.C.,* 13 July 1816, 17 ; 27 July 1816, 12 ; Chittaranjan Nepali, *General Bhimsen Thapa Ra Tatkalin Nepal* (Kathmandu, 2013 Vikram Samvat), pp. 301-2, 312-4.

32. *S.C.*, 22 June 1816, 31 ; Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", *op.cit.*, pp. 149-50.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Tachienlu on the Szechuan border was an important trade centre. Chentu was the capital of Szechuan.
35. B. H. Hodgson, *Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects* (London, 1880), Vol. 1, pp. 167-73.
36. Hodgson was Officiating Resident in 1829-31 and Resident in 1833-43. For his life see W. W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson* (London, 1896).
37. *S.C.*, 14 October 1829, 23.
38. The Pandes were one of the parties scrambling for power at Kathmandu, the others being the Gurus, Thapas, Basnaits and Bishtas. *Excerpts from the letters of the Resident . . . from 1830 to 1840 by J. R. Tickell, Asst. Resident, S.C.*, 18 January 1841, 74 ; *A Narrative of Principal Events in Nepal from 1840 to . . . 1851 by Captain Nicholetts. Asst. Resident, P.C.*, 11 November 1853, 23.
39. *S.C.*, 14 September 1842, 83 ; 10 August 1842, 126 ; Parker, "Nepaul and China", *op.cit.*, p. 80.
40. A. Cunningham, *Ladak, Physical, Statistical and Historical*, (London, 1854), p. 333.
41. Parker, "Nepaul and China",*op.cit.*, p. 80.
42. *S.C.*, 31 May 1841, 154.
43. *S.C.*, 3 January 1842, 128.
44. *S.C.*, 11 October 1841, 89 ; see my article, "Nepal and the Sikh-Tibetan War, 1841-2", *Bengal : Past and Present* (Calcutta), January-June 1963, pp. 12-25.
45. *S.C.*, 13 December 1841, 42 ; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, 244, 248 ; Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-8, 64-71.
46. M. W. Fisher, L. E. Rose, R. A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground* (London, 1963), pp. 49-59.
47. *S.C.*, 14 September 1842, 83.
48. L. E. Rose, "Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan border states", *Orbis*, (Pennsylvania), Summer, 1961, p. 202. Hodgson also reported that "no importance is attached by the Chinese to their relations with Nepal and they are maintained by Nepal chiefly or solely to be played off against us [British], if need be". Letter to Government, 9 November 1833, *P.C.*, 21 November 1833, 36.
49. Jang Bahadur was the first Rana Prime Minister of Nepal who came to power in September 1846 and ruled until his death in February 1877. For his life see General Pudma Jung Bahadur Rana (his son), *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur . . . of Nepal* (Allahabad, 1909).
50. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *op. cit.*, p. 81.
51. *S.C.*, 25 August 1854, 52, 54.
52. See my article, "Nepal-Tibet War, 1855-6", *The Journal of the United Service Institution of India* (New Delhi), April-June 1964, pp. 175-94.
53. *S.C.*, 30 November 1855, 58.
54. *Ibid.* 77-81, 88.
55. Aitchison, op. cit., pp. 97-100, f.n. ; *S.C.*, 28 December 1855, 81.
56. Orfeur Cavenagh, *Reminiscences of an Indian Official*, (London, 1884) p. 169. Cavenagh was political officer attached to Jang Bahadur's mission to Europe.
57. Resident to Government, 10 July 1861, *Foreign Political A Proceedings* (Hereafter cited as *F. P-A*), October 1861, 44.
58. *India Foreign Proceedings, Political* (Hereafter cited as *IFP*), Vol. 760, July, 1871, 100.
59. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *op. cit.*, p. 81.
60. Pudma Jang Bahadur, *op. cit.*, pp. 281, 285. The author says that the title was given in April 1872 but the Resident, Richard Lawrence, reported to Government on 22 May 1871 that Jang Bahadur had received this title, *IFP*, Vol. 760, July 1871, 100.

61. Resident to Government, 9 June 1866, *F.P.-A*, June, 1866, 163.
62. W. W. Hunter, ed., *Essays on the External Policy of India, by J. W. S. Wyllie,* (London, 1875), p. 197.
63. *Foreign Secret Proceedings,* September 1876, 129-33, Departmental Notes, T. H. Thornton, Offg. Secy., Foreign Dept. to Wade, 25 July, 1876.
64. T. J. Cooper, one such explorer, sought the help of the head of the Nepalese embassy to China at Chengtu and Bathang; the Nepalese, however, refused to take Cooper along with them to Lhasa for fear of Chinese disapproval. Cooper, *Journal of an overland journey from China towards India,* (Calcutta, 1869), pp. 53, 68, 74.
65. *F.P-A,* October 1867, 127; August 1867, 53-4; July, 1868, 203; June, 1873, 462-75; *Foreign Secret Proceedings,* 1870, 400-04; *Nepal Embassy Records* (In the National Archives of India), List No. 13, Richard Lawrence to Colonel Haughton, D.O., 13 April 1869; *F.P-A.* May 1875, 104A; *Foreign Revenue B Proceedings,* April 1872, 4-7; T. J. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer Of Commerce* (London, 1871), pp. 158-9, 398.
66. *Political and Secret Letters Received From India* (1882), No. 65, 14 July 1882, Encl. 3-6; *Ibid.,* Vol. 20, No. 140 of 1878, E. C. Baber, Consular Officer, Chungking, to Fraser, *Charge d'Affaires* at Peking, 2 August 1878.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Foreign Secret Proceedings,* September 1876, 129-33, Keep With, Departmental Note.

K Mojumdar

Summary of my Political Impressions about India

ST. PETERSBURG, THE 13 APRIL 1891

Arrived at Bombay, on the 11th December 1890, we have started to visit the principal native states which have preserved their old dynasties under the mask of independence: the Nizam of Hayderabad, the Gaikovar of Baroda, the Maharajas of Djoodpoore, Djeypoore, Olowar and the Scindia of Gwalior, a child of 14 years old. All those little potentates had been invited by the British Government to receive His Imperial Highness and they have shown too much keenness in doing so by flaunting their Oriental wealth before the jealous eyes of the British residents watching over them. Those very British officers who introduced them to the Tsarevitch, served as interpreters and intermediaries. We have never been alone before the native princes; but in spite of the restraint they imposed upon us, for fear of arousing suspicions of their masters, there have been manifestations of sympathy for the son of the Emperor, chiefly in the North, relatively close to our frontiers, where the population is mostly male and the prestige of Russia, very great. Undoubtedly, in those manifestations, we must take into consideration the curiosity excited by the presence of His Imperial Highness in India, as the natives and the British themselves have never been able to admit that it has been a simple pleasure trip. It is probable that the Indian politicians will still take a long time to penetrate into the mystery of this voyage and of the alleged political plans linked up with it.

As we have been very little in direct relation with the natives, it has been difficult for us to catch the real impression left upon them by the voyage of His Imperial Highness. More than a legend, interesting in the psychological point of view, will have crossed the frontier of India and found acceptance in the bazars of Caboul and of our provinces of Central Asia. It is known that the Hindus would consider themselves lost, if they ate with the foreigners or even with the Hindus of another caste. So they could not conceal their surprise when they found us at table with the British. This circumstance upset their conception regarding the Russians whom they thought quite different from the British. It was for them as if a sort of deception.

The native states enjoy a pretty great liberty of interior administration under their dynasties, generally corrupted, depreciated, devoid of prestige which might have been able to disturb the rest of the British. The latter do not try at all to reform too much their governmental regime, as this sort of action, they feared,

might have shaken it from its very base and forced them to take too early the charge of direct administration of their provinces. Systematically they shut their eyes on their abuses, so long as they remain politically faithful and so long as they let themselves be exploited by the British trade and industry. They seem to say to them: do whatever you like, provided you pay and remain quiet.

Especially they take good care not to wound their religious feelings, not to react against superstitions, sometimes the most wild ones, for fear of setting the people against them. The British residents, accredited to those potentates, and instructed to watch over them, are generally old military men who are also aged and weary. The British Government prefers them to young and active men who, by their zeal and energy, might have provoked useless questions and created difficulties.

After the native states we have visited the provinces directly administered by the British; these provinces are by far more prosperous, more progressive and better governed than the native states.

We have made short stays at Lahore, Delhi, Agra, in the heart of the country where the mutiny of 1857 was prevalent and violent, at Benares, at Calcutta, after which we have travelled rapidly the south, Madras, Tanjore, Trichinopoli, Madura, Tutticorin, from where we embarked for Ceylon on the 30th January 1891.

We have thus made a tour of India by train, stopping at every place where there was anything interesting to see.

Though the British have apparently tried to show us only the advantageous sides of their position and administration, it is not less true that we have been struck by the order and peace prevailing in this vast empire. This result has been obtained by a handful of the British, between 100 and 120 thousand in all, dominating the entire continent having 250 to 280 millions of inhabitants.

Those British alone who have seen closely the Indian people can explain themselves this phenomenon. And, indeed, the majority of the native population, morally and physically, belong to some inferior races, where a man becomes old at the age of 40 and a woman, at the age of 20, knowing neither the national unity nor the religious one.

The Hindus and Musulmans hate one another. The Hindus of the North and of the centre do not understand at all a single word of the language of the Hindus of the South. I have been struck to see that our Hindu and Musulman servants, recruited from Central India, were completely out of their element in the south, not understanding a single syllable of the language of their southern fellow-countrymen and co-religionists.

The British, therefore, do not require to take much pains to divide these peoples in order to be able to dominate them. They are already divided and they have been always so. For many centuries they have been resignedly under the crushing yoke of the conquerors who have, in turn, invaded and devastated this country; the British yoke, in spite of insolence and egoism of the Anglo-Saxon

race, is certainly less severe than that of the Mughal dynasties. The last Mughal dynasty disappeared at the time of the Sepoy mutiny of 1857.

Sometimes, it is imagined that India is a country more or less homogeneous, that the British domination alone stands in the way of her national existence. Nothing is less exact, in reality.

If, through the effect of some great event, the British domination happened to disappear, the native peoples would be incapable of an independent political existence, and another power or even many other European powers, due to the force of circumstances, would be brought to take the place of England in order to pacify and govern this immense country.

During our visit to the Maharadja of the right bank of the Ganges, in front of Benares, a high British officer, showing me the elephants, magnificently caparisoned, which had been used in the procession of the Tsarevitch, spoke to me in jest: Here is the secret of the domination of the British over 280 millions of natives. Thereupon he drew my attention on the blending of rich fabrics, covered with precious stones, and of loathsome rags fastened with used ropes on the back of the elephants. "This used rope and these rags", added my interlocutor, "are the image of incorrigible indolence and carelessness of the natives; and so long as those people will use frayed off ropes, we shall remain their masters".

Undoubtedly, there exists in India less effeminate peoples, in the Panjab the sectarian Sikhs, and in general, 40 to 50 millions of Musulmans who do not inspire the British with the same confidence or the same hatred as others: but this cloud, on the horizon of the British domination, seems to be still far away.

The British Government, after having crushed the Sepoy mutiny, has served as a substitute for the famous East India Company, whose superannuated existence had its days. One must bear in mind that this insurrection was purely military and that the people have not been a party to it. It was the army of the old kingdom of Aoude, commanded by native heads and imprudently dissolved by the East India Company, which was the body and soul of this movement. From that time, the British have adopted a different method: they have increased considerably their army, excluded the natives from the least military command, and taken possession by the British soldiers all the forts, and they have not left a single cannon in the hands of the native soldiers, admitted into the army in the ratio of three natives for one British. The highest grade that a native can attain is that of a major.

The troops of Southern India are considered by the British themselves as an army of comic opera. The regiments of the north are more strong and they inspire the British with confidence. As to the troops purely British, they are made up of volunteers who enrol themselves in England not because they have military acumen but because they hope that once the military service is over they will make their future by joining in some other lucrative career. This British army is cer-

tainly beautiful and satisfies the internal requirements of the moment, but it has not had the occasion to prove itself before a European army.

The divisions that exist among the Indian peoples, their moral and physical inferiority, the iron grip of the British and the immense prestige of the latter before the natives who generally consider a European as a superior being, kneaded out of a different paste than themselves, and finally, the spirit of justice and equity which the British show while imparting justice—these are the principal factors of the British domination in India.

As far as justice is concerned, it is curious to note that the people are passionately bent on keeping the British judges whom the Government seeks to replace gradually by the natives brought up in the new schools. I have been struck when I have noticed with how much care selection of the administrative and judicial personnel is made. They are almost always persons who do credit to their country and who are not at all declassés or adventurers seeking to fish in troubled waters. The latter are expelled mercilessly from the public offices.

It is equally right to recognise that the British have done immensely for the country during these last 20 years: they have traced in India carriage roads, rail lines, they have dug important canals which will render the famine less and less deadly; they have pacified their country, formerly torn by continuous wars amongst the weak native Princes and devastated by the periodical invasions from the north. Undoubtedly, the people still remain in an extreme poverty, in a miserable condition, but they have always been so for thousands of years and they will always be so; because they have no needs; they hardly live on a little quantity of millet—rice is a luxury for them—and they do not put at all any thing on.

The British endeavour to fight against ignorance and cruel superstitions of these peoples, by establishing schools everywhere. It is curious to observe that for their domination in India they fear (after Russia) nothing but the consequences of ignorance and superstition of the people. They still remember with terror that the stern attitude of the sepoys, during the insurrection of 1857, had for principal cause the accredited belief among the Musulmans that the British made their cartridges besmear with the fat of the hog in order to make them fail in their religious duties.

On the other hand, the school and the diffusion of knowledge may consequently arouse among the Hindus and Musalmans the feeling of their nationality and of their political rights. The education has already produced a class of literate patriots who make a great fuss and deliver inflammatory speeches in the Calcutta Congress. They flaunt, it is true, the feelings of loyalty towards the British Government and the Queen "Empress", they pretend to aim only at the reform of the abuses and to aspire only to obtain their place in the sun, but it is not less true that this class of malcontents will increase in number in course of time.

The British affect to attach no importance to this Congress which they tolerate, they affirm, as they think that the hot heads will be attracted there and they will

be able to watch over them. They deduce that it is the British of the opposition group who are the instigators, the ringleaders of this Congress whose pedantic discourses would meet no sympathy in the country. It is not less certain that the danger now denied by the British will be extant in future. One of the most important Governors of India told me that the day when the natives would be conscious of their strength and of their political rights and when they would lay claim to the commands in the army, that day, said he, we shall be obliged to yield and we shall yield, seeking fortune elsewhere, for example, in our new African possessions, because we are too intelligent and too practical to expose a handful of British to the hatred of 280 millions of inhabitants.

If the British seem to be reassured for a long time on the side of the native people, I have been struck on the other hand on each step of their distrust towards Russia, when I have noticed a real terror inspired in them by the approach of Russia from the northern side.

Many distinguished British people have told me that they have lost even the power of reasoning coolly before this living wall which stands before them.

Every body—British and native—is imbued with the fatalistic conviction that, sooner or later Russia will invade India. I have never talked for ten minutes with an Englishman without noticing this preoccupation, this sort of fixed idea in the conversation. More than once, during our voyage, natives of the lower class—porters, horse-drivers,—have asked me for any token that they might use for their safe passage, in case they would find themselves before our soldiers. So, the principal preoccupation of the Government of India is to fortify the northern frontier, to build strategic roads and rail lines. Huge sums of millions of pounds are annually swallowed up in those preparations for defence.

This state of unhealthy mind explains the impression of surprise, of anxiety which has been produced upon them by voyage of the son of the Emperor in India. More encrusted with their prejudices than the Government of London, the Indian authorities have had much difficulty in ascertaining the real aim of this voyage. They betrayed constantly the preoccupation of not doing anything that might diminish their prestige before the natives. They have had to pass through endless tugging before they have been made to understand the absurdity when they have tried to put the August Guest into the background.

Let us note casually that in India we are attributed the intention that we shall occupy Khorassan in very near future and that we shall push forward upto the Persian Gulf. One of the members of the Council of the Viceroy told me that if England was convinced that we would never disturb her in India, she would take all interest in making this double acquisition easier for us.

It is believed that there are Russian Agents everywhere studying the region of the Persian Gulf and that I too had the intention to return to Europe through the Persian Gulf and Persia—such is the spirit of the British in India, always inclined to attribute to us all that they apprehend from us.

I stop here. But if the Imperial Ministry thought that it would be useful to put to me some questions that might interest them and that might be within the reach of my remembrance, I shall lose no time in completing this notice.

Signed: Onou.

Editor's note: In 1964 this very valuable document was found by the Editor in the Archives of the October Revolution in Moscow. He was there on an official visit to explore records of Indian interest in the Soviet archives. The top sheet of the document is written in Russian. But the report is written in the French language. It has been translated for us into English by Mr. Kalicharan Kormocar, a member of the Calcutta Historical Society.

Editorial Notes

Two pages from a rough note book of Sir Jadunath Sarkar are reproduced in this number. There are 120 such pages in this note book, filled with his entries, covering the period, 1760 to 1803. Sir Jadunath's scholarship was rigorous and he had his own very strict method. Many of us who had to stumble through Indian history of the eighteenth century before the *Fall of the Mughal Empire* was published remember how confused this century of Indian history appeared to us. It was like a bag of loose stones. Sir Jadunath's narrative flows with the easy grace of a rippling brook. It is now very difficult for a reader of his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* to form an idea of the magnitude of his task and the amazing thoroughness of his work. The patience with which he charted the course of events before a single page of his narrative could be composed is best illustrated by these rough notes.

The Golden Jubilee number of *Bengal Past and Present* was published in 1957. I was then its editor. I am still at the editorial desk. In the not too distant future some other person should shoulder this responsibility. The first article of the Golden Jubilee number was from the pen of Sir Jadunath Sarkar. He died shortly after it was published. Dr. Surendra Nath Sen's article had also enriched the number. He died in 1962. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, another eminent contributor to the 1957 Jubilee number, is happily still in our midst and is still as active as ever.

Ideas about historical research are fast changing and *Bengal Past and Present* has adjusted itself to changed circumstances. In 1907 when this journal was first published British imperialism was in its heyday. Calcutta was then the capital of India. Earlier issues of the journal were mainly concerned with the European in India. A very competent American research worker complained to me that *Bengal Past and Present's* earlier issues were disappointing. He could not like their preoccupation with trivia, much of it entirely personal. But the journal was in accord with the spirit of the times. In those days attention was almost monopolised by political and military history. But this journal also conveyed a vivid impression of European social life in India. Nowhere else do we get such an impression of the complex British milieu in such abundant measure. *Bengal Past and Present*—its earlier issues—will remain an important source of history for those who will take any interest in the European when he was dominant in India.

Things are so very different now. Calcutta no longer occupies its old position of preeminence. Bengal is divided. British imperialism belongs to past history. The writing of Indian history has also been very much influenced by decolonisation. Political and military history now recede into the background. Social, economic and administrative history now receive their due share of attention. Fortunately for

73

12 July. Mahdi Quli Kabuni [illegible] MC 149. 20

Aug. 30. Peshwa Narayan Rao murdered. Raghunath succeeds.

c. 2 Sep. Jat Envoy [illegible] (under Dan Shah)
C. 15 Sep deferred by an imperial [illegible] CPC. 538

c. 20 Sep. Dan Shah dies of wounds

21 Sep. Najaf Kh. attacks [illegible] GA. 15-

3 Oct. Najaf Quli Kh. & other Persians [illegible]
Nawab Bah. defeated [illegible]

c. 24 Oct. [illegible] at Kaithal, [illegible] Barsana

30 Oct. Battle near Kaithal. Nawab defeated GA. 37-
310 MS. Bodleian Add. IV. 638.

12 Oct. Mumin-ud-Daula dies

22 Nov. Ghulam Qadir interviews Emperor. DC

11 Dec. Najaf [illegible] GA. 40-

C. 15 Dec. Shuja conquers Etawa [illegible] CPC [illegible] 238. 907
J. A. S. B. 114

1793

18. Juni Sakiss [illegible]

8 Juli Potter & Nagel brand mit Papierfabrik, [illegible] ML. 153, CPC. IV. 304
18 [illegible] Papierfabrik 973
9 [illegible] Nagel mitunterzeichnet Schreiben

[illegible] SPA 29/263

21 [illegible] Schreiben [illegible] Schiffahrt, [illegible] 978
29 [illegible]
31 März Negelein [illegible] CPC 978,

c. 18 April [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

12. [illegible] Hofer Paul [illegible] 9 Fr 50 -
ML 152. Miskin 295, CPC 1000, 1006, 1015

23 [illegible] Nagel [illegible] Gesellschaft [illegible] III. 335
[illegible] ML 145,

21 [illegible] CPC IV. 1002

[illegible] 8,97
[illegible] 534
1352

SPC. 1015, 1197
1241

[illegible]

us Indo-British cooperation in the field of Indian historical research is more conspicuous than ever. *Bengal Past and Present* is now the journal of the research historian in the field of modern Indian history and related Asian history. In the fitness of things we should have given the journal a new name—India Past and Present. But the old title is retained. It is our link with the past.

Book Reviews

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE, A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY, Narendra Krishna Sinha, Calcutta, 1966, pp. vi+192 Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Price Rs. 10/-.

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee has that elusive but rare distinction of belonging to the folklore of his own people. Children in Bengal grow up with stories of his exemplary conduct and impressive fearlessness. In their youth they live under his shadow at the University. In maturity we have him as one idol in a fairly numerous pantheon. On 29 June 1964 the centenary of his birth fell due and the Committee appointed to see to its proper observance called upon the present holder of the Asutosh Professorship in Medieval and Modern Indian History at the University of Calcutta to write a biography of the great man. The present book is the outcome in an admirably short time.

Professor Sinha begins with the unavoidable chapter on 'early years' but then wisely dismisses chronology in favour of reviewing the works of Sir Asutosh in his various capacities. We are given a chapter each on Asutosh as a legislator and as a lawyer and judge. Then two chapters follow on education. A fifth chapter examines his strained relations with the Government of India in the years 1914 to 1921. Two more chapters give us a survey of his last years and an assessment of his significance. There are four appendices in one of which Dr. R. N. Sen reviews the work of Sir Asutosh as a mathematician.

In the first chapter Professor Sinha adds a few more stories to what may be called the Asutosh collection for the children of Bengal. He should have spared himself this trouble, specially because it sets a pious tone to the whole effort. The second chapter shows that Asutosh did nothing very striking as a legislator but was an occasional critic of the government. He was far more important as a lawyer and judge in which capacities he used his profound knowledge of the Hindu society to facilitate its adjustment to modern conditions. Professor Sinha acknowledges with his usual modesty that because he himself is not a lawyer he could not do full justice to this theme.

The two chapters on Asutosh as an educationist are undoubtedly the best in the book, and it is by them that it should be judged. As an historian Professor Sinha began by trying his hands on such folk-heroes of nationalist mythology as Ranjit Singh and Haidar Ali. An awakening interest in the changing social milieu enabled him to grow out of this pietistic tradition. The man we have come to admire in him is the man who writes of the Bengali environment in motion. In this book, to go from the first three chapters to Professor Sinha's treatment of

the theme of education in Bengal is to accompany him from Ranjit Singh to the second volume of his *Economic History of Bengal*. This is rewarding experience.

It is important to note, however, that Professor Sinha never discards his essential nationalism. He only alters its content and its context. The first point of interest in his chapter on Western education in Bengal is his attack on Sir Charles Wood. These days it is the tacit assumption in certain circles that although the importance of Robert Clive in Indian history may well have been somewhat overstressed, the fact that men like Sir Charles civilized India can not be doubted. Professor Sinha is not amused: "In our usual glib style we talk about Wood's Despatch of 1854 as the Magna Carta of English education in India. Parallels never walk on all fours. But this parallel has a certain appropriateness. The Magna Carta is regarded by many to be in its origin a feudal document. But it was capable of gathering new meaning and it became a national document" (49-50). The English were never interested in giving education to the Indians but they were forced to provide for a supply of suitably trained clerks for their own administration. Indians utilised the machinery created for this purpose to educate themselves. It was the job of Sir Asutosh to lead this movement in Bengal. The machinery he had to hand for this purpose was, to put it mildly, inappropriate for the purpose. The Government dominated the University which was run in effect by the votes of the European members of the Senate. Sir Asutosh bullied them into working for the education of Bengal.

At the same time and with characteristic thoughtfulness Professor Sinha provides a critique of the University of Calcutta. This august institution, created as an examining body, was not meant to provide a renaissance. The broad intellectual trends in nineteenth-century Bengal developed beyond its precincts. But again it was Sir Asutosh who goaded the University into 'taking possession of this precious heritage' (52). In doing this, however, Asutosh fell foul both of the government and an agitated public who were bent on sacrificing education because they thought it might do them some good. The turn in the attitude of the government is well brought out from some documents hitherto inaccessible (p. 93 ff). But Professor Sinha refuses to elaborate on the criticism from the Bengalis which came the way of Sir Asutosh. We are given only one nasty, surreptitious letter written by that excellent man Sir Surendranath to Sir Malcolm Hailey in 1923. On the whole therefore we have to guess at Asutosh's failings. The picture that finally emerges is one of a great constructive worker, who must have his own little empire. No one connected with the University of Calcutta would question this verdict. To the present reviewer however, the virtue of the book lies not in its treatment of Asutosh but in Professor Sinha's incidental analysis of the changing intellectual climate of Bengal. The historian is in his element when the biographer forgets his subject.

ASHIN DAS GUPTA.

THE EXTREMIST CHALLANGE—Amales Tripathi, Orient Longmans, pp. 246, price Rs. 18/-.

Dr. Tripathi has given us a fine analysis of cultural, political and economic forces at work during the years 1890-1910. British reactions and policy changes are described in the last two chapters. The thorough analysis of ideological and religious factors is very convincing. He has shown how "India absorbed Aurobindo in her slow and effective way as she has absorbed so many strands of foreign ideas before". Dr. Tripathi has also "dispelled the cobwebs of misunderstanding that hang over Bankim's thought". Prof. Clark, Charles Himesath and others including some muslim scholars who should know better, regard him as a revivalist and communalist. It was not perhaps possible for them to reach the breadth of broad spaces and glowing peaks in his thinking. The role of Aurobindo and Bankim in our nationalist movement has been properly assessed. "Extremism was an attitude but it is impossible to pinpoint its beginnings". The author's analysis of the causes of the failure of extremism is convincing. There is new information in almost every chapter. Appendix C, with its charts and tables of Terrorism, disproves very effectively the dogmatic generalisation of Kumarov and Livrovsky that the terrorist attacks in Bengal were a "petty bourgeois method of struggle". The author quotes with approval the view of an eminent British historian: "They (Moderates) stood ready to serve but were in effect fobbed off". Does the author think that the cooperation of the moderates would have put Indo-British relations on a stable basis? In the circumstances so perceptibly described by him this policy of appeasement could not have succeeded. The sterile bureaucracy of course helped to create a sense of greater frustration among all politicians.

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM IN INDIA—Bipan Chandra, People's Publishing House pp. 783 price Rs. 45/-.

This is not a dissertation. It is a hold-all, too big, too long, too heavy. It is exasperatingly repetitious, a remarkable contrast to Dr. Tripathi's book. But inspite of its bulk it does not mark a very new departure. But there is one merit in bigness. Here and there some facts not known before catch the eye The book could easily have been reduced to one-fourth of its size and that would have added to its quality. A reader of this volume may be excused if he feels that Dr. Bipan Chandra put all his notes together without making any attempt at pruning. There should be a limit to the size of doctoral dissertations in our universities as in Oxford and Cambridge. Newspapers perhaps mould public opinion but I did not know before that they mould doctoral dissertations in our branch of knowledge to such an extent. International Relations as an intellectual discipline might be dependent to this extent on newspaper cuttings. I could not read this bulky volume with meticulons care. But I think, in the midst of all these quotations from every source I miss one from Aurobindo's book—*Bankim-*

Tilak-Dayananda—the men that pass: "without the economic history of R. C. Dutt and its damning story of England's commercial and financial dealings with India we doubt whether the public would have been ready for boycott. In this one instance it may be said of him that he not only wrote history but created it". A reader of this volume will have an impression that this most politically effective contribution to economic literature is not more important than the Amrita Bazar Patrika.

Dr. Bipan Chandra's book covers the period from 1880 to 1905. It is claimed for his book that it provides "an insight into the quality of the intellect of the pioneers of the national movement". Its usefulness consists in its collected data. The quotations sometimes give an insight.

A HISTORY OF ANARCHISM—Atindra Nath Bose, World Press pp. 424 price Rs. 25/-.

This treatise on anarchism is published posthumously, six years after the death of the author. There are different shades of belief in a stateless society. The author describes the divergent approach, the basic ideas. This history discusses the ideas of Laotse, utopia of *Krita* age, the polis vs the cosmopolis, the cynics, the stoics, Jewish tradition, the Anabaptist movement, William Godwin, Robert Owen, Joseph Proudhan, Max Stirner, Michael Bakunin, Nihilism in Russia, Kropotkin Syndicalists, Josiah Warren, Benjamin R. Tucker and others. The analysis is thorough. Limitations of Utopian and revolutionary anarchism are discussed in the last few pages. The bibliography, which gives us an idea of the vast literature on this subject in different languages, is impressive reading. The erudite scholar, with his fine philosophical sense, assimilated this vast miscellany of works on this subject of his choice. The impact of anarchism on modern thought has been analysed.

THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH LAW INTO INDIA—B. N. Pandey, Asia Publishing House pp. 248 price Rs. 26/-.

Professor C. H. Philips writes in his foreword that it is the true story of Impey in India. He adds that it has directed a new beam of light on Warren Hastings's governor-generalship. Dr. Pandey has made an attempt to prove that Impey was one of the best of men, who was always guided only by his zeal for the introduction of British law in India.

The most decisive event in the career of Impey was the trial and execution of Nanda Kumar. Let us see how Dr. Pandey has treated this episode. He goes so far as to say on the evidence of Barwell, a professed enemy of Nandakumar, that Nandakumar acknowledged the justness of the sentence by which he suffered. Barwell's evidence can be trusted only when he throws beams of light on bills of exchange. Dr. Pandey should know it.

Nandakumar did confess in a letter which he wrote to Clavering—"the forgery of the bond of which I am accused never proceeded from me". Impey, in his charge to the jury, said, 'If the witnesses are believed whatever you may think of the forgery there is evidence of publication with the knowledge of forgery". According to Chambers, one of the four judges, "the jury gave a verdict comparable to the evidence". All these statements deserve to be explained and Dr. Pandey has not tried to explain them because he is concerned only with the beneficient role of Impey.

Was the Jewels Bond forged? Yes, but not by Nandakumar but by Padmamohan who was Bolaki Das's attorney, in charge of his books and papers. The widow of Bolaki Das and his nephew Gangavishnu knew everything about this forgery. Padmamohan's underling Mohan Prasad also knew it. The widow, the nephew, as also Padmamohan wanted to have this money which would otherwise have gone mostly to charities. We would be justified if we conclude that Mohan Prasad did not get from Padmamohan the share of the bond money he had expected to receive. Padmamohan was much too dominant in the affairs of Bolaki Das. Padmamohan and Gangavishnu as also Bolaki's widow had first approached Maharaja Nabakrishna (Nubkissen) but he was much too cautious to agree. Then they approached Nandakumar who agreed to help them. We are not in a position to say whether he was a beneficiary and if so to what extent. To give an air of impartiality Impey said only casually that there was great improbability that a man of Nandakumar's rank and fortune should be guilty of so mean an offence for so small a sum of money. It may be mentioned in this connection that Nandakumar left to his son Gurudas property worth twenty-five lakhs. As he wanted to help the family out of the difficulty created for them by the will of Bolaki Das the whole affair of this jewels bond publication was conducted with the greatest openness in the presence of the widow of Bolaki, his nephew Gangavishnu as also Padmamohan and Mohan Prasad. No complaint was made until after two years and a half. By then Padmamohan was dead. The widow of Bolaki Das was in Benaras, Gangavishnu was now in the clutches of Mohan Prasad. A civil suit was now instituted in the court of Cutchery. When the Dewani Adalat was constituted the civil suit of Gangavishnu against Nandakumar was instituted there. Here it is relevant to note that Mohan Prasad knew very well the art of blackmail and his most profitable business was champerty. He had Gangavishnu in his grasping hands. Boughton Rous, who presided over the Dewani Adalat, could not come to any decision. Miss Lucy Sutherland, in her article in the English Historical Review, "New Evidence on the *Nuncoomar* trial" quotes Boughton Rous's remark—"There was a darkness in the whole conduct of both parties, which after much careful enquiry prevented me from passing any decision perfectly satisfactory to my mind and indeed left an impression not very favourable either to one side or the other". The forgery case was brought for trial before the Supreme Court not by Gangavishnu but by his attorney Mohan

Prasad. Sometime before the forgery case was instituted Nandakumar wrote to Clavering about Mohan Prasad—"His being admitted by the Governor-General to private conference in the town and his gardens must be done on account of his enmity and malevolence to me". Bolaki Das's widow was in Benares, Gangavishnu, though resident in Calcutta, in the house of Mohan Prasad, was declared to be so ill that he could not be brought to Court. Padmamohan, who was perhaps most responsible for this forgery, was dead. Impey practically asked the jurors to place their reliance upon the evidence of Mohan Prasad. If the widow of Bolaki Das and his nephew had given their evidence it might have been possible to see through false evidence on both sides. This was the first important criminal trial in the Supreme Court and the evidence that had confused Boughton Rous was made more confusing still in the absence of two witnesses who knew so much about the jewels bond. Should we give Impey and the jurors the benefit of the doubt or should we agree with Dr. Pandey's pompous claim that the trial and execution of Nandakumar represented "the first victory of the Supreme Court over the executive government of Bengal?"

Dr. Pandey had access to all relevant records in the British Museum and the India Office Library. He has omitted reference to Ms. Eur F. 7 which contains a letter written by Nabakrishna—"there was violent contest between the three new gentlemen and the governor and Mr. Barwell. When governor saw no means of escaping but through the protection of Lord Impey he made use of Mr. Stewart, Secretary of the Council, who was his friend and intimately connected with Lord Impey, to bring about a friendship between them which Mr. Stewart effected and brought over Lord Impey to the Governor's side as well as two other gentlemen of the Adalat . . . . Mohan Prasad gave in his complaint and Nandakumar being found guilty it was immediately proclaimed before the world that Nandakumar's death was on account of the Governor's displeasure and every one was struck with awe of the governor". This letter shows collusion between Hastings and Impey (also Hyde and LeMaistre). The letter is omitted. It is not mentioned even in the bibliography.

Add. Ms. 30441 which contains a letter of Chambers dated 3 January, 1778 is not also mentioned in the bibliography because it contradicts Dr. Pandey's theory of no conspiracy. Chambers wrote, "I argued against the general unfitness of punishing forgery with death in this country. My arguments on this head were overruled in private as they had been in public. The credit of Nandakumar's evidence against the governor was thus not only invalidated. It was destroyed entirely by taking the witness not only out of the way but out of the world".

Dr. Pandey has adopted the method which Hastings and Mohan Prasad "the ostensible prosecutor" had adopted of preventing important witnesses from appearing before the judgment seat. But this dissertation is certified by Prof. Philips as the true story of Impey in India.

N. K. SINHA.

SELECTIONS FROM EDUCATIONAL RECORDS, Part I 1781—1839: By H. Sharp, C.S.I., C.I.E. Price Board Bound Rs. 8·25 or 19 sh. 3d or 2$.97 cents, Part II, 1840-1859 By J. A. Richey C.I.E. Board Bound Rs. 15·00, Cloth Bound Rs. 18·00. Published for The National Archives of India by The Manager of Publications, Govt. of India, Delhi 1965 Pp. 225 & 504 with Appendix and Index.

The two volumes are reprints of the Selections of Educational Records Vols. I & II originally published by the Bureau of Education of the Government of India in 1920 and 1922. The National Archives has since then brought out two supplementary volumes dealing respectively with educational reports (1859-1871) and select documents on the development of university education (1860-1887). As the two earlier volumes edited by Messrs. Sharp and Richey were out of print for some time, the National Archives rightly thought it proper to undertake their re-publication. This has placed at the disposal of those interested in the educational policy and activities of the Government of India upto the eighties of the last century, a ready-made compilation of all relevant documents on Education in serialised volumes. The first volume which closes with Auckland's Minute is a collection of documents dealing with the early private enterprise by individual employees of the East India Company (W. Hastings, J. Duncan, W. Fraser, among others), of the Company itself, the foundation of institutions like The Calcutta Madrassa and Sanskrit College, the first grant in aid of education, the surveys made with a view to a wide dissemination of knowledge, the study of the English knowledge, Macaulay's Minute and Extract from the Diary of H. T. Prinsep etc.

The companion volume (1840-1859) covers a period marked by the evolution of the provincial systems of education on which documents in the form of letters, despatches and reports are fairly prolific. The compiler's choice of the documents is judicious. The inclusion of a full text of the Despatches of 1854 and 1859 and of the University Acts has added not only to the bulk but also to the importance of the volumes.

The two volumes, as the Editors say, 'do not purport to be a history' but without their aid no history of Indian education in the early days of British rule can be written.

A DICTIONARY OF INDIAN HISTORY—By Sachchidananda Bhattacharya published by The University of Calcutta, 1967, price Rs. 40·00 with a Foreword by Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Preface by Professor N. K. Sinha, Introduction, Chart of dates and Appendix, Pp. 889.

Professor Bhattacharya took upon himself the bold and laborious task of providing 'students, teachers, journalists and general readers' with a handy book of reference on the main historical figures and events of the dated period of India's history down the ages. The volume contains nearly 3000 entries of places,

persons, institutions and events arranged in an alphabetical sequence. For any individual to have undertaken and completed such a big task is indeed laudable, all the more so, in that it is the first venture in lexicography on Indian history. Professor Bhattacharya deserves congratulation for his scholarly labour. His book has all the characteristics of a pioneer work and it is hoped that the next edition will be free from 'errors or omissions' which the writer of the Preface anticipated. The reviewer notes that the anticipation has proved to be more than casual.

N. R. RAY.

The Calcutta Historical Society Past & Present

Stray incidents or chances are known sometimes to play a decisive role in the life of individuals; but that their influence extend over the life-history of institutions as well is illustrated in the origin of the Calcutta Historical Society, sixty years ago from this day. Strangely enough, the proposed demolition of a grave in the Park Street Cemetery is linked up with the birth of the Society. In January 1907 a Calcutta Daily published a notice issued by the Christian Burial Board. It announced the proposal of the Board to demolish "a pyramidal grave which bears no name and which is in a dangerous condition in the above cemetery", in case no desire was conveyed from any one interested to restore it.

The 'notice' did not go unnoticed. On February 18, 1907 Mr. Robert Dunbar wrote a letter in the *'Englishman'*. He identified the grave at that of Mrs. Barwell (wife of Richard Barwell, Hastings' colleague in the Fort William Council) and urged that steps should be undertaken for its restoration and proper preservation. Two days later Mr. J. De Grey Downing followed up with a letter in the columns of the same daily suggesting the formation of a Historical Society for Calcutta. "Would it not be possible", he wrote, "to form a Society having for its object the gathering together of the threads of history of Calcutta, of its once prominent citizens, their houses and their old time social rendezvous and pastimes? It would not be difficult to form a nucleus of a Calcutta Historical Society which in the course of a few years with a band of earnest workers would gather together such a goodly pile of information and records and would provide the material for a full and lasting history of old Calcutta a sufficient justification for such a Society's existence, apart from the happy result of bringing together those who are interested not only in the land we live in, but in the history of 'citizens of no mean city". On February 21, 1907 Mr. Wilmot Corfield entered the correspondence column with the constructive suggestion that such a Society should make all possible efforts to bring out a learned journal of its own.

The suggestions were taken up in right earnest by 81 members of the Calcutta elite, European and Indian, who assembled at a public meeting in the Town Hall on April 27, 1907 with Sir Francis Maclean, Chief Justice of Bengal, in the Chair. The meeting resolved:

(i) That a Society to be called the Calcutta Historical Society be formed for the purpose of preserving ancient and historical institutions in Calcutta and its environs and

(ii) that the Society do adopt, for the purpose of furthering its aims, and as a means of disseminating a knowledge of the history of this province, a magazine to be entitled Bengal Past and Present.

It also elected the office-bearers of the Society for the first year as follows:

PRESIDENT: The Hon'ble Francis Maclean, Chief Justice, High Court of Judicature, Calcutta.
SECRETARY: Mr. Robert Dunbar
TREASURER: Mr. Wilmot Corfield
EDITOR: *Bengal Past & Present*—The Revd. W. K. Firminger.

Two among the correspondents, Messrs Dunbar and Corfield were thus actively associated from the beginning with the Society which owed its origin, in no small measure, to their interest and initiative. The number of ordinary members in the first year was 186. Among them were "judges of the High Court, members of the Indian Civil Service, Indian Army Officers, distinguished members of great Indian families and businessmen".

The Society was registered in the year of its foundation under Act XXI of 1860. The first number of its journal, Bengal Past and Present, made its appearance in October 1907 under the able editorship of the Revd. W. K. Firminger. It came out in regular quarterly instalments till June 1911. The journal priced at Rs. 5·00 per issue was printed for the proprietors by W. E. P. Hume and published by the Calcutta General Printing Co. at the Edinburgh Press, 300 Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.

The first four years were years of remarkable activities for the Society. It had during these years, to its credit, the publication of *The Diaries of Three Surgeons of Patna, 1763* edited by W. K. Firminger (1909), *Calcutta Faces and Places in Pre-camera Days* compiled by Wilmot Corfield (1910) and *Narrative of the life of a gentleman long Resident in India* by G. F. Grand with Introduction and Notes by W. K. Firminger (1911). Meanwhile Mr. Cyril Champkin succeeded Mr. Robert Dunbar as Hony. Secretary and Chief Justice, the Hon'ble Sir H. Lawrence Jenkins was elected President of the Society in place of the Hon'ble Sir Francis Maclean.

But before the fourth year was hardly completed the Society, contrary to hopes with which it was founded, found its position uncomfortable as Mr. Champkin, the energetic Secretary, left Calcurta permanently and Rev. Firminger, the able and erudite editor, left on two years' furlough. It was impossible to fill up their places and the Society's activities were in abeyance till the end of 1913. With Firminger's return the Society was given a new lease of life. The Executive Committee gave up, with considerable relief, the idea it had been forced to entertain for about two years (1912-1913) of merging the Society in the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Firminger volunteered to add to his onerous duties as Venerable Archdeacon of Calcutta, the office of the President of the Society (he was succeeded after a year by Lord Carmichael, the first time that "the Chair of the Society was honoured by being occupied by the Governor of Bengal") and the Editorship of the Journal since January 1914. His confidence expressed at a General Meeting of the Society (March 1914) that "there were reasons for believing that if this Calcutta Historical Society were revived it would prosper . . . . and should have a long, useful and continuous future before it," was amply justified. Till his retirement from service in Calcutta in July 1918 his labour and talents made the largest contribution to the excellent standard attained by Bengal Past and Present as a reputed journal of Indian history. Thanks mainly to his initiative the members of the Society were taken round to several historical sites in Bengal—Chandernagore, Serampore, Cossimbazar and Murshidabad, among others. Excellent accounts of these excursions and sites were brought out in the form of booklets. Other publications of the Society included *Mrs Fay's Original letters from India* with an Introduction and Notes by the Venerable Walter K. Firminger, *Genuine Memoirs of Asiatacus, 1773-1778*—A new edition by K. N. Dhar with Notes and Introduction by the Ven. W. K. Firminger and *History of the Armenians in India* by Meshorb J. Seth and *Old Calcutta*—a set of ten reproductions from old prints issued in post card form.

For three years (1918-1921) Firminger's work as Editor was carried on by Mr. S. C. Sanial. But the Society was hit hard in the banking account and the cloud of uncertainty once again cast its shadow on its future. But it passed off no sooner than Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, and Hon'ble Mr. H. E. A. Cotton, President of the Bengal Legislative Council were elected in 1922 as President and Vice-President of the Society respectively. Mr. A. F. M. Abdul Ali, the Keeper of the Records of the Government of India, took over as Hony. Secretary. The editorial work of the journal was entrusted to a committee composed of Hon'ble Mr. H. E. A. Cotton as Chairman and Messrs. A. F. M. Abdul Ali, T. O. D. Dunn, Alexander A. Cassells, I.C.S. and Rai Bahadur P. N. Mullick as members. The Committee justified the confidence reposed by the members and before Cotton left in 1926 the journal was once again fully rehabilitated. More than that Bengal Past and Present now became one of the standard vehicles of historical research and original work on aspects of history not only of Calcutta and Bengal but of modern India. As Firminger explained in one of his Annual Meeting Speeches "the word 'Bengal' in the title enables the Society to draw upon a wide store of materials, for Bengal can be understood in the historical and not in the mere geographical sense, as connoting the historical Presidency of Bengal."

The office of the Society was removed in 1925 from Cotton's Chamber in the Town-Hall in which the Bengal Legislative Council was then accommodated to a room (Room 57) of the Imperial Record Department situated at 3 Government Place West, Calcutta. The Editorial Board was able to bring out the second

volume of Index covering Vols IX to XVIII, supplementing the first Index volume, printed earlier, dealing with Vols I-VIII.

In 1926-27 His Excellency Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor of Bengal, accepted the office of the President of the Society in succession to the Earl G. Lytton. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, whose association with the Society was destined to be life-long was elected as President of the Executive Committee in 1925. Mr. R. B. Ramsbotham of the Indian Education Service took over as Hony. Editor of the journal and succeeded in enlisting the services of Sir Evan Cotton, Sir William Foster, Rev. Father W. S. J. Hosten, Mr. C. W. Gurner, Mr. J. J. Cotton, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, D. B. Parasnis, Dr. W. A. Hutton as regular contributors to the journal.

The journal was able to maintain 'the Editor's Notes' as one of its much-looked-forward-to features and among its regular contributors were such stalwarts as J. J. Cotton, I.C.S., Brigadier-General Bullock, F. R. Hist. S. and the Ven'ble Dr. W. K. Firminger who even after his retirement from India continued to take unflagging interest in the affairs of the Society till his death in February 1940.

In July 1929 Mr. Ramsbotham having left Calcutta, on transfer to Chittagong, Mr. C. W. Gurner succeeded him as Editor of the journal. In spite of his exacting duties as a Senior member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Gurner carried on the work as Hony. Editor with rare devotion till 1938.

1932 saw the completion of the 25th year of the Society's existence. The occasion was marked by a celebration at the Indian Museum, on March 3, 1932 with the Governor of Bengal in the chair. In course of his address Sir Stanley Jackson observed:

"A quarter of a century is a long spell in time for the Society of this kind which has neither Club House nor the stimulation of regular meetings—to hang together, and the fact that the Society has not only kept going but has steadily enhanced its own prestige and popularity is, I think, evidence of the extent to which its foundation was justified".

The work of preparing the third part of the Index to Vols XIX-XXI undertaken several years back was completed thanks to the herculean labour of Mr. N. N. Ganguly, the Hony. Asst. Editor. It was published in the year 1939 in which Mr. Percy Brown, Curator, Victoria Memorial Hall, succeeded Mr. C. W. Gurner to the Editorship of the journal. Since 1937 Bengal Past and Present was published as a bi-annual journal.

In order to popularise the Society and to create interest in its activities, the Executive Committee decided in 1940 to organise periodical Tiffin Meetings at which short papers on historical subjects could be read and discussed on the lines of the Rotary Club. The first Tiffin Meeting was held at Spence's Hotel on Friday the 2nd August 1940. Major Harry Hobbs read an interesting paper on 'The Barmaids of Calcutta: 1860-1902". At subsequent meetings held between September and November papers on "Trade in Elephant (1506-1661) and the E.I.Co.", "Bengal under the Independent Sultans" and "Racing in the good old days of the

John Co." were read respectively by Mr. J. C. De, Prof. Mahfzal Huq and W. S. Birney.

In 1936 the Imperial Records Office, having been removed to Delhi, the Society was in need of a room. Major Hobbs, the Treasurer and a great friend of the Society, came to its rescue by providing a room at his own office at 9 Old Court House Street. Five years later, at the instance of Maharaja Sir Prodyot Coomar Tagore, a foundation member and Vice-President of the Society, the office was shifted to the Tagore Palace at No 12 Prasanno Coomar Tagore Street, Calcutta where it remained till the death of the Maharaja in 1944. The Imperial Library (Now National Library) thereupon provided space for the storing of the journal and publications in one of its rooms first at Esplanade East and then at Belvedere House till 1953. The generous Major Hobbs offered accommodation in premises no 12B Marquis Street for four years at the end of which the office was given a new address at 12/1 Old Court House Street, the office of Mr. B. N. Bose, Solicitor, who shared with Mr. N. N. Ganguly the office of the Hony. Secretary since 1948. The present office of the Society located at 33/1 Amherst Street, Calcutta-9 was made available, free of rent, through the courtsey of the authorities of St. Paul's College, Calcutta in October 1964.

Even as the Society was being put to serious inconvenience because of frequent changes of its office, 1957 marked the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. To celebrate the happy occasion, the Society brought out a special Golden Jubilee Number of Bengal Past and Present under the Editorship of Dr. N. K. Sinha, now Asutosh Professor and Head of the Department of History, Calcutta University. Dr. Sinha took over in 1953 the Editorship of the journal from Professor D. N. Banerjee who had succeeded Mr. Percy Brown in 1948. The Commemoration Volume (Serial No 142, Vol. LXXVI, Jubilee Number 1957) was enriched by distinguished historians, Indian and foreign, with their contributions. As the Editor claimed in his notes: "Bengal Past and Prtsent no longer confines itself to local history. It has became an important journal of modern Indian history as it was of the history of Bengal in the British period".

The Society suffered an irreparable loss in the passing away of the most eminent among our historians, Sir Jadunath Sarkar on the 19th May 1958. Professor Sarkar's association with the Society which dates back to 1925, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, had been long and intimate. The journal was enriched by his numerous articles and the Society by his guidance ungrudgingly lent for more than thirty years. It is no exaggeration to say that Bengal Past and Present would not have been what it is today but for the standard set by Sir Jadunath, as Chairman of the Society's Executive Committee.

Khan Bahadur G. A. Dossani acted as Chairman of the Executive Committee from 1959 till the Society elected the Most Reverend H. L. J. De Mel, M.A., D.D., Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India, Pakistan, Burma & Ceylon as its President at its Annual General Meeting in April 1963. Maharaj Coomar S. C.

Nandy M.A. of Cossimbazar was elected at the same meeting as Hony. Treasurer in place of Khan Bahadur G. A. Dossani. Sri N. R. Ray took over as Hony. Secretary in August 1964, following Mr. B. N. Bose's death.

1965 ushered for the Society a phase of renewed activities on an extended scale. In March 1965 the Society adopted a revised constitution defining its aims and objectives as follows:

(i) to promote and encourage the study of the history of modern India and her neighbours with particular reference to an emphasis upon regional history of Bengal and especially of Calcutta and its environs;

(ii) to provide for the delivery, organisation and conduct of lectures, exhibitions, meetings, tours and conferences, calculated to promote directly or indirectly, advanced study of history in regard to modern India in general and of Bengal and Calcutta in particular;

(iii) to help in the preservation of ancient and historical institutions and monuments in Calcutta, historical records, mss. and old prints;

(iv) to undertake the publication of a journal devoted to the dissemination of a knowledge of the history, sociology, folklore and other allied subjects related to the studies whose promotion it is the object of the Society to ensure;

(v) to edit, annotate and reprint articles etc. from old numbers of the journal calculated to help and guide students engaged in research and advanced study on modern Indian history;

(vi) to publish books, monographs, bulletins, research-series etc. in furtherance of the objects of the Society and

(vii) to do all such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them within the limits of the funds of the Society.

In February 1966 the Society held a public Reception to meet Dr. R. C. Majumdar in the Hall of the Asiatic Society, for the purpose of conveying to 'the doyen of Indian historians' its appreciation of his enduring contributions to the study and knowledge of Indian history. As part of the programme for the expansion of the Society's activities, Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose gave a highly instructive talk on some aspects of the growth of Calcutta during the years 1911-1961 from the point of view of an anthropologist.

This was followed by the publication by the Society of ITIHAS (New Series), the Bengali quarterly journal of history, originally sponsored by the now defunct Bangiya Itihas Parishad. Itihas may claim to be the first journal of history in India to be published in an Indian language. Another venture of the Society in 1966-67 is the bringing out in a book-form of the serialised article—*House of Jagat Seth* by J. H. Little, an indispensable book for the students of 18th century history of Bengal.

Our tale it told. We have watched the Society grow during sixty years of its life. It had, of course, its days of gloom and despondency. But it has gone on.

Its critics had been few, admirers many. At one of its early annual meetings (1908) Mr. Justice Holmwood referred to a letter he had seen in the papers which charged the members with 'patronising history from a lofty and exalted platform'. A hasty conclusion after the journal had barely run one year's course! A more discerning critic would perhaps be inclined to find in the pages of the journal, in earlier years, at any rate, a tendency towards over-emphasis on small details about minute things concerning the Britishers in Bengal especially in Calcutta and neighbourhood. But this has not lessentd in any way the debt that students of Indo-British period owe to Bengal Past and Present. Research papers and original work on modern Indian history by advanced students abound with references to its pages.

The canvas is now much wider. The change in concept and emphasis has been great. The Society has reacted promptly and its older journal today serves as an organ of modern Indian and Asian history. The publication of *Itihas,* in addition to Bengal Past and Present, has enabled the Society to serve a larger number of readers interested in the study of history, both in India and abroad. The universities and academies in Europe and the U. S. are being enlisted in increasing number as subscribers to our journal. We wish we would receive the same encouragement from our own colleges and universities. We would be happy to win the good will and patronage of the resident European population of Bengal to whose initiative the Society owed its origin. We fervently hope that Itihas, the first journal of history to be published in Bengali, and in fact, in any Indian language, will bring the Society into contact with an ever widening circle of lovers of history.

The two journals are, of course, the leading feature of the Society's work. But apart from maintaining the journals, the Society has other aims and objectives to fulfil. We do hope it will be possible for us to organise lectures by competent scholars on select topics of history and recruit younger scholars in larger numbers to its service. The guidance and experience of the old combined with the enthusiasm of the young will help the Society to effectively widen the sphere of its activities. The expectation of one of the sponsors of the Society regarding "a full and lasting history of old Calcutta" remains yet to be fulfilled.

A Society, like ours, relying on membership fees can never be financially self-supporting. We feel we deserve more liberal subsidies from the Governmtnt than we have received so long.

On this happy and historic occasion we gratefully remember all those individuals and institutions who worked in the past to make the Society what it is today and conclude with the hope that its work in years to come will bear more fruit than it has done so far.

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